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The Four Gospels in the  
Earliest Church History



The Baird Lecture for 1907

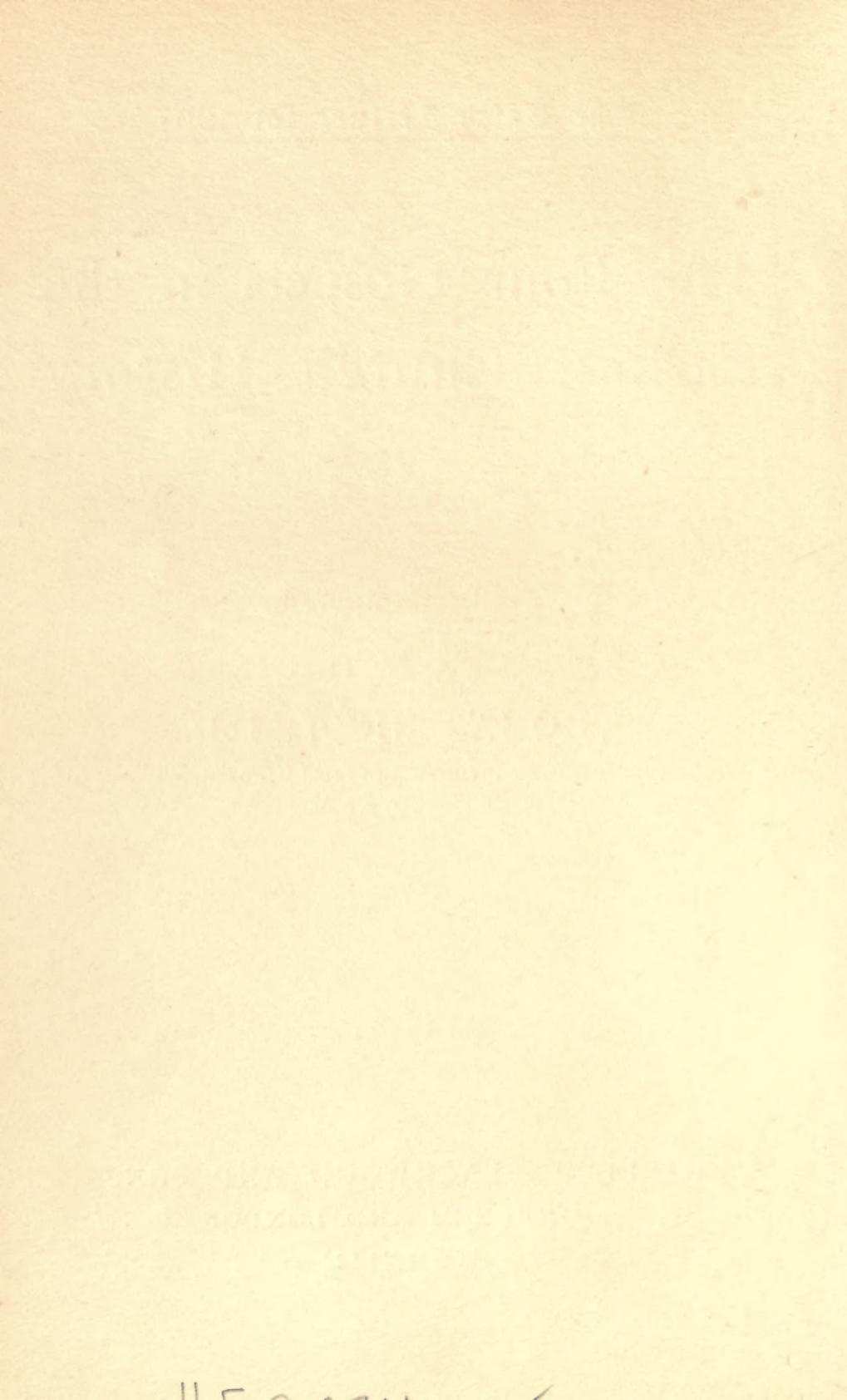
# The Four Gospels in the Earliest Church History

BY

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MCMVIII



In Memoriam

*THE VERY REV. A. H. CHARTERIS,*

*D.D. (EDIN. AND ABERD.), LL.D.*



## P R E F A C E.

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HOWEVER the ground may change in the conflict as to the credibility of the Gospel history, the first line of defence, it seems to me, must always be the external evidence. It is the external evidence for the Four Gospels which I have endeavoured in these Lectures to state in the light of the most recent research. The statement does not profess to be minutely exhaustive, but it is hoped that nothing material has been overlooked.

To the Baird Trustees I owe cordial acknowledgments for giving me the opportunity of dealing with this important subject for the first time in their Lectureship.

It has been a high gratification to me that my old teacher, Professor Charteris, has read the Lectures in proof, and done so with the ardour and keenness of former years. From my ever-helpful colleague, Professor Cowan, I have received similar aid and many valuable suggestions.

My debt to the chief authorities in this field,

as the reader will at once perceive, is great. A selected list of books, most of which have been consulted, is given after the table of contents. Of these, Eusebius's 'Ecclesiastical History' deserves special mention, M'Giffert's translation, with its valuable notes, having been in constant use. Next to it, the monumental works of Professor Zahn have been of service. His 'Einleitung in das N.T.' (in its third edition) has now been translated, and will be published in the course of this year. The references in the Lectures are to the translation, of which the publishers, Messrs T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, kindly allowed me to see the sheets in advance. To our great English scholars I am under deep obligations; and with the works of Westcott and Lightfoot, Sanday and Stanton, I venture to name Professor Charteris's 'Canonicity,' which, though out of print, is by no means out of date.

*P.S.*—This volume had been passed for press with a dedication to the Very Reverend A. H. Charteris, D.D., LL.D., "as a tribute of admiration and affection from an old student." His sudden death on April 24 has made an alteration necessary. It is now with the deepest gratitude dedicated to his memory.

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN,

*May 2, 1908.*

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# The Four Gospels in the Earliest Church History.

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## INTRODUCTORY.

IN any estimate we form of the trustworthiness of the Gospels as a presentation of the Life, the Teaching, and the Work of Christ, much depends upon the directness of their sources and their proximity in time to the events which they record. When He is represented as the completion of God's earlier revelation of Himself to man, it is a momentous consideration whether He is a mere mythological figure or a great historical Personality. When the impression of Him conveyed by the writers of the Gospels is that of a Divine Person of supernatural power, stainless purity, and unwearying goodness, it is of supreme importance for us to have the assur-

ance that the picture has been drawn from the life. When there are words attributed to Him expressing the consciousness of unique Sonship to God the Father, a Sonship which was "perfect in every relation and of cosmical and eternal significance," it is of profound concern to us to have a record of them reliable and sure. As regards that death which He died upon the Cross, of which He said that it was a ransom for many, and of which His commissioned Apostles declared that it was for the remission of the sins of the world, it is of the utmost consequence to know that the evangelic and apostolic testimony is in accordance with the facts. And when the same narratives, with variations in detail but with substantial unanimity, record the Resurrection, setting before us the two momentous facts of an empty sepulchre and a Risen Lord, it is essential for the fulness of Christian faith and hope to be assured that the facts involved are not the invention of the first disciples, nor the result of reflection on the part of the growing Christian community, but historical realities vouched for from the beginning and attested by eyewitnesses who could not be mistaken.

Now if the Gospels were works of the second century, written by unknown authors or produced by reflection and discussion within the Christian

community, we could not have the same assurance of their trustworthiness. It would be difficult in such a case to maintain that the original tradition had not undergone transformation as it travelled downwards, and to show that the Gospel record was free from admixture of exaggeration and embellishment. But if we can have good reason for holding that the Gospels—and with them the Acts of the Apostles—were written within the lifetime of men who had seen the Lord, and if we can trace them to writers who were either credible eyewitnesses themselves or took pains to ascertain from eyewitnesses and trustworthy authorities the truth of what they record, then we may have confidence that the portrait they have drawn for us is the real Christ, that He actually performed those mighty works, and spake as never man spake, and died upon the Cross, and rose from the grave, and ascended to heaven for our redemption.

It is true there are those who decline to admit that the Gospels are more credible and trustworthy because they are contemporary records. Professor Schmiedel says:<sup>1</sup> “If our Gospels could be shown to be written from 50 A.D. onwards, or even earlier, we should not be under any necessity to withdraw our conclusion as to their

<sup>1</sup> *Encyclopædia Biblica*, art. “Gospels.”

contents; we should, on the contrary, only have to say that the indubitable transformation in the original tradition had taken place much more rapidly than one might have been ready to suppose. The credibility of the Gospel history cannot be established by the earlier dating of the Gospels." No! because no evidence, in the judgment of Schmiedel, could attest a miracle, the old doctrine of David Hume a century and a half ago. Professor Harnack, after having shown by a scholarly and elaborate argument that Luke the Physician, the author of the Third Gospel and of the Acts of the Apostles, was the fellow-worker and companion in travel of St Paul, and that his Gospel, depending to a considerable extent upon St Mark, fell within the days of the Apostles, guards himself against holding that St Luke's narrative is therefore more reliable and trustworthy as a record of facts.<sup>1</sup> This is doctrine that can only be maintained in the teeth of the established canons of historical credibility. Strauss did not go to the length of critical hardihood professed by these two scholars. He has said in his 'Life of Jesus': "It would most unquestionably be an argument of decisive weight in favour of the credibility of the Biblical history could it be shown that it was written by eyewitnesses, or

<sup>1</sup> *Lucas der Arzt*, p. 159 ff. (English trans.)

even by persons nearly contemporaneous with the events narrated" (p. 55). We can meet the dictum of the Berlin Professor with the judgment of a scholar of our own, not one whit behind Professor Harnack, in a field where both have a well-established pre-eminence. "In no other department of historical criticism," says Sir William Ramsay, "except Biblical, would any scholar dream of saying, or dare to say, that accounts are not more trustworthy if they can be traced back to authors who were children at the time the events occurred, and who were in year-long, confidential, and intimate relations with actors in these events, than they would be if they were composed by writers one or two generations younger, who had personal acquaintance with few or none of the actors and contemporaries."<sup>1</sup> This judgment is in accordance alike with the canons of historical credibility and with the dictates of common-sense. We would not withdraw the Gospels from the tests of literary and historical criticism. But we claim that their genuineness and credibility should be admitted when those tests have been applied and they have satisfied them.

<sup>1</sup> Expositor, December 1906.

## CHAPTER I.

## EARLIER CRITICAL THEORIES.

WITH the exception of the Alogi in the second century, an obscure and insignificant sect, who, on internal grounds, assigned the authorship of the Fourth Gospel to Cerinthus; and of Faustus,<sup>1</sup> the Manichæan in the fourth century who suggested that the titles of the Gospels *According to Matthew*, *According to Mark*, and so on, designated not the authors but the authorities from which the actual writers derived their materials,—the genuineness of the Four Gospels may be said to have passed without question down to the close of the eighteenth century.

It is the Fourth Gospel which has had to sustain the most formidable attacks of negative criticism. The assault was opened in 1792 with a book on ‘The Dissonances of the Evangelists,’

<sup>1</sup> August., *Contra Faustum*, xxxii. 2. Cf. xxxii. 16, 19, 21, 22; xxxiii. 6-8.

by Edward Evanson, a man of little scholarship and less critical judgment, who rejected the Fourth Gospel because of the discrepancies, as he alleged, between it and the other Gospels, especially St Luke. An attack from such a quarter could scarcely expect to prove of any great effect, but it was sufficient to break in upon the unanimity of acceptance which the Gospels had uninterruptedly enjoyed from the beginning, and it fastened upon points which raise difficulties even for believing critics. The next attack was made, again upon the Fourth Gospel, in 1820 by Bretschneider, a German pastor of scholarship and repute, with a volume entitled ‘Probabilities Concerning the Nature and Origin of the Gospel and Epistles of the Apostle John.’ He maintained that the Johannine discourses were largely imaginary, and that the author was not the Apostle, nor a native of Palestine, nor a Jew, but rather some Christian of Alexandrian training, who wrote this Gospel in Egypt, whence it was taken to Rome and put in general circulation by the authority of the Roman Church. His treatise called forth replies, by which, strange to relate, this impugner of the genuineness of the Fourth Gospel was convinced, so that he became a powerful advocate of the Johannine authorship.

From this time forward, however, the genuine-

ness and the credibility of the Gospels were freely called in question. That great movement of the human intellect called the *Aufklärung*, which German historians declare to have been for significance and strength of influence only second to the introduction of Christianity and to the Reformation, was then in full tide, and its principles were being applied to the Biblical history. Narratives containing the supernatural and the miraculous were held to be contrary to reason, and had to be explained away or altogether set aside. Of this rationalistic criticism H. E. G. Paulus, Professor of Theology, first at Jena and latterly at Heidelberg, was a conspicuous example. Already in 1800 he had published a 'Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels,' explaining away the miracles of the Gospel history; and in 1828 he published a 'Life of Christ.' He does not dispute the historical character of Jesus, but he sets himself, by all sorts of exegetical devices and interpretations, to get rid of the miraculous element in the Gospel history. He admits the occurrences of a miraculous character related in the Gospels to be facts, but he insists that they are only natural facts whose real causes the eye-witnesses and narrators had no proper means of ascertaining. Under the naturalistic treatment of Paulus the 'Life of Christ' is transformed into that of a wise Rabbi, who performed no miracles,

but from love to men executed innumerable works of charity, with the help of medical skill and in virtue of a measure of good fortune attending his exertions. He reduces the Gospel narratives to a tissue of paltry deceptions and ridiculous trivialities, and his character of Christ is a miserable caricature of the reality. A great deal of the coarser rationalism and scepticism of more recent times, along with some that would resent being called coarse, is animated by the same spirit, and proceeds by methods little different. As a serious attempt to account for the Gospel narratives and the Person of Christ it is no longer to be reckoned with.

Seven years after Paulus had given to the world his ‘Life of Christ,’ David Friedrich Strauss published his ‘Leben Jesu.’ He was at the time Tutor in the Theological Seminary at Tübingen, and he leaped into notoriety at once by the publication of his work. Although more thoroughgoing in his scepticism than Paulus, he rejected entirely his rationalistic exegesis. He saw that no straightforward exposition could remove the miracles from the Gospel history, so deeply and firmly are they embedded in the narratives of the Evangelists. He accordingly framed his famous mythical theory to account for the Gospels and the Person of Christ. A good and holy Jew named Jesus, who had

gathered round Him a band of enthusiastic and credulous followers, was in course of time metamorphosed by them into the Divine Christ, whose figure the Evangelists set before us. In their enthusiasm and devotion they imagined numerous fictions regarding Him, and by-and-by they mistook their own inventions for realities and ascribed them to Jesus, with no intention to deceive. The fruitful mind of the early Church thus created myth after myth. Spontaneous impulse had by the end of the first century brought into existence the materials of our present Gospels. At last three unknown authors arranged these materials and produced the Synoptic Gospels. In the scheme of Strauss the Gospel of Matthew was adopted, not as the work of the Apostle of that name, but as the most original and relatively credible of the three, although it too had undergone many revisions. Sixty years later arose another great unknown, whose character must have been a strange compound of mysticism, enthusiasm, and imposture, but who produced the Fourth Gospel and palmed it off upon the Church as the work of the Beloved Disciple. Strauss has a poor opinion of the Fourth Gospel, and especially of the discourses of Jesus which it records. But he maintains its absolute unity, comparing it to that of the seamless coat of which it speaks. Strauss's mythical theory has

entirely failed. The whole picture of Christ as exhibited in the Gospels is as remote as possible from the exaggerated and fantastic creations of mythology, and the universality characteristic of the picture is far above and beyond the local and national features which usually mark the myth. No fictitious growth such as Strauss postulates could have given us, even if the interval of time and circumstances had otherwise allowed, the Figure which is the supreme and ineradicable miracle of the Gospel history, the Person of Christ. Strauss's 'Life of Jesus' gave rise to a vast and varied literature when it was first published for the learned world, but when in 1864 he reissued it in more popular form for the German people it attracted comparatively little attention.

Great as was the excitement created throughout the Christian world by the assault of Strauss, his attack was in itself feeble and superficial in comparison with that of Baur, who had been his master at Tübingen before his 'Life of Jesus' was written. Baur was Professor of Historical Theology at Tübingen from 1826 to 1840, when he elaborated the system in which he professed to account in scientific fashion for the origin and early history of Christianity. The chief importance of his work, and of the critical school which he founded, lies in the elaborate investiga-

tion which he made into the origin of the New Testament and into the history of the Apostolic and the post-Apostolic age, with their variously constituted parties. With Baur, as with Paulus and Strauss, the rejection of the supernatural in every form was an axiom. He found the elements of the Christian religion in conceptions and ideas already current in Judaism and heathenism, and he traced the phenomena of Christianity to them as the products of a natural development. Paying little heed to the external evidence attesting the existence and use of the New Testament Scriptures, Baur believed himself able, by a study of the literature of the Apostolic and the post-Apostolic age, to exhibit the true course of the development of Christianity.

Primitive Christianity, as Baur conceives it, is Ebionitic in its character, distinguished from Judaism proper only by the place it assigns to the Crucified Jesus, in whom it sees the promised Messiah who will come again to perfect His kingdom. Of this stage the first Apostles, Peter and James and John, are the leading representatives, and they still observe circumcision and the other requirements of the Law.

In opposition to this narrow and conservative Ebionite type is the Pauline conception of Christianity, which is universal in its character, asserting freedom from the Law, and claiming

for Jesus pre-existence, oneness with the Father, and generally the attributes of Godhead. In the opposition which he claims to have discovered between St Paul and the Three, Baur finds the pivot for his reconstruction of the entire Christian history. Not only is this opposition seen in the differences between St Paul and the Judaising Christians of the Apostolic age, but it continues down into the second century, where it is to be clearly recognised in the so-called Clementine literature—the Clementine Homilies and Recognitions in which St Peter, and St Paul in the character of Simon Magus, are leading and opposing figures.

In the face, however, of Gnostic error threatening both the Petrine and the Pauline wings of Christianity, and of persecution on the part of the Roman State, a synthesis of these opposing tendencies is brought about, and their contending voices are silenced in the unity of the Catholic Church, which is attained by the third quarter of the second century.

To these three stages of the development of Christianity Baur assigns the various New Testament books, as well as other works not included in our canon. To the first belongs the Apocalypse, which he considers to be Ebionitic in character and accepts as the genuine production of St John. To the second belong the four

principal epistles of St Paul,—Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and Galatians,—in which the radical opposition between St Paul and the Judaisers is so clearly marked. To the last stage, running well into the second century, belong the rest of our canonical books, including the Four Gospels, which by their conciliatory character, as Baur conceived, were manifestly produced to heal the divisions of an earlier time. Of the Gospels, Baur, like Strauss, as we have seen, considered St Matthew the most authoritative, because it betrays least of party feeling. Whilst St Matthew, written about 130 A.D., is Judæo-Christian in its spirit, St Luke, written about 100 A.D., is universal, after the fashion of St Paul, and St Mark, written later than St Matthew, is of a mediating tendency. The latest of the Gospels, as Baur infers from its highly developed Christology, is that bearing the name of St John, which was not written till about 150 A.D. The Four Gospels were not the work of companions of Jesus, but the productions of men nearly a hundred years after His death, written in the interests of conciliation, and all of them “tendency” writings.

Baur’s scheme of early Church history tore up Christianity by the roots, and swept away even the testimony of the Apostolic Fathers. For a time it seemed as if the very citadel of Christi-

anity had been taken, and the theory and school of Baur became dominant, and remained in power throughout Germany for some decades. Those who did not accept the results of his investigations, and still upheld the genuineness and credibility of the Gospels, were stigmatised as apologists and traditionalists.

The reaction against the extreme conclusions of Baur and his School was sure to come. Within the circle of his immediate adherents differences began to show themselves. Hilgenfeld, now the last survivor of those first followers, early detached himself from Baur's main propositions, and so did Ritschl, who showed in 1857 that there was no fundamental difference between St Paul and the primitive Apostles. Weizsäcker, Baur's successor in Tübingen, declared it to be a mistake to suppose that in the post-Apostolic age there were only Paulinists and legalising Jewish Christians. Professor Harnack, in an early essay,<sup>1</sup> has pointed out that Baur and the Tübingen School had an eye only for ideas and intellectual conceptions, and laid far too little stress upon those vital relations embracing the facts of spiritual experience and motive forces thus brought into play, which the speculative critic has no plummet to sound and no calculus to estimate. "New life," says Harnack, "creates

<sup>1</sup> *Reden und Aufsätze*, ii. 221.

new opinions—not only new opinions new life. Much more attention is therefore now directed to the social life, the public worship, the morality, and the discipline of the early Christians than was ever the case with the Tübingen School.”<sup>1</sup>

In the overthrow of his imposing scheme of reconstruction, the admission which Baur had made of the genuineness of the four principal Epistles of St Paul played an important part. From these Epistles the essential facts and doctrines of Christianity can be deduced as they are set forth in the Gospels and the other books of New Testament Scripture, and their testimony has been found wholly antagonistic to the superstructure which he erected upon them.

We have already noticed that Baur paid scant attention to the external evidence on behalf of the early circulation and use and authority of the Gospels. The fresh investigation of the early Christian literature in the first and second century, to which Baur’s revolutionary theories

<sup>1</sup> A recent writer effectively emphasises this in his own way. “The greatest personalities in political history, in philosophy, in literature, and in science, with the results they have achieved, have not obviously been the product of their environment, and if they have been due to evolution, it has certainly not been an evolution so simple and straightforward in its *modus operandi* as that which here accounts for the origin of the Christian religion. It has had its surprises—its Shakespeare from Stratford, its Napoleon from Corsica, its Lincoln from the backwoods ; but there must be no surprises of any kind in the New Testament.”

gave an impulse, became one of the most powerful weapons in the hands of the defenders of positive Christianity. In this field an incalculable debt of gratitude is owing to Westcott, Lightfoot, and Sanday among English scholars, and to Zahn and Harnack among Germans, for their laborious researches and their successful vindication of the traditional dates of the Gospels, and for the materials they have collected in defence of the genuineness and credibility of the record. In this connection acknowledgment must be made of discoveries of manuscripts of the Gospels and other documents filling up gaps in the early Christian literature, whereby fresh links in the chain of proof have been found and the case for accepting the Gospels made, as many are glad to believe, irresistible. By the progress of patristic studies, by the discovery of fresh literary materials, and by a thorough re-examination of the sacred writings themselves, notably the Epistles of St Paul, the Tübingen theory of early Church history and literature has been completely overthrown. "I am far from disparaging the historical importance which belongs to the Tübingen School," says Professor Harnack in the essay already quoted. "But as regards the development of the Church in the second century, it may safely be said that the hypotheses of the Tübingen School have proved themselves every-

where inadequate, nay erroneous, and are to-day held by very few scholars." No doubt the influence of Baur is still at work in the critical and theological sphere in Germany and elsewhere, and there still are, as we shall see, scholars who call in question the grounds of the reaction from his extreme conclusions. But the return to tradition, so far as the chronology and authority of early Christian writings are concerned, is now justified as the assured result of much scholarly and laborious research, and the view of the books held from the beginning is not likely, after the failure of Baur, ever to be successfully challenged.

## CHAPTER II.

## SOME RECENT CRITICISM.

IT was upon the external attestation of the Gospels and other books of the New Testament that Baur's great scheme of the reconstruction of the early history and literature of Christianity most notably made shipwreck. Driven from the external evidence, his critical descendants have taken refuge in the internal, where subjective considerations have freer scope to cast doubt upon the credibility of the Christian documents. Accepting our Gospels as they stand, the more extreme wing of the successors of Baur have set themselves, by an abuse of critical analysis, by misleading analogies from the study of Comparative Religion,<sup>1</sup> and by an abundance of arti-

<sup>1</sup> There is a considerable school of thinkers who assure us that all early religions are born in an atmosphere of myth, mystery, and legend, from which they gradually emerge into something more orderly, historical, and tangible. So the narratives of the Virgin Birth of our Lord, His Miracles, His Resurrection and Ascension,

ficial assumptions, to reconstruct the Gospel history on a purely naturalistic basis. In this reconstruction we find only a humanitarian Christ, and in some extreme theories Christ disappears altogether, and Christianity is left to be produced by a sort of spontaneous combustion. Bethlehem is not the place of His birth, which is more likely to have been Nazareth or somewhere in Galilee. It was not at Jerusalem, nor anywhere in Palestine, that the belief in the Resurrection was cast in its final mould by the evangelical Easter legend, but at Antioch, where the disciples were first called Christians. There Gentile Christians, who had been wont in their heathen state to celebrate the worship of Adonis, the Master, transferred the idea and the worship to a new Master, Christ. We have been accustomed to believe that Jesus was condemned and suffered death because He claimed to be the Messiah

are the legendary setting of the Christian religion. But the proposition thus laid down is a mere hypothesis, and the deduction to the disadvantage of the Christian faith is extremely precarious. The story of Buddha in ancient and genuine Buddhist literature is not mythical nor miraculous. The myths and miracles and supernatural elements, notably the so-called Christian-like elements in Buddha's life, came in nearly a thousand years later. Buddhism passed downwards from philosophy and the search for the Way into myth and idolatry and superstition and atheism; not upwards from myth to truth. The same might be said of Confucianism and Taoism. See "Taoism," by Archdeacon Moule, in 'Church Missionary Review,' October 1907.

and the Son of God. No, say the latest critics, His Messianic claim was the invention of the first believers and was attributed to Him, like the Resurrection, as the result of reflection and discussion among themselves. We have been accustomed to regard the Four Gospels as biographical or historical records enshrining the portrait of our Lord as He appeared to men in the days of His flesh. In this, according to these critics, we have been mistaken. They are not so much histories as apologetic and theological treatises, exhibiting a development which begins with St Mark and reaches its culmination in St John. Even St Mark's Gospel, which is recognised as the oldest of all, and has been regarded as specially marked by vividness and circumstantiality, is now declared to belong to the history of dogma. It is not easy to meet theories of such pure subjectivity, nor to answer arguments and speculations so elusive and dissociated from facts. But they all offer us in the end a Christ who is an ideal figure destitute of historical reality, or a Christ who is a mere man and who never rose again from the grave. That such a Christ should have mastered the mind and soul of St Paul, as we see from his Epistles and his work as a pioneer of the Gospel; that such a Christ should have become the foundation of the Church and of Christendom—these

are miracles greater than those at which unbelieving critics take offence.

Of theories of the Gospels, that which has perhaps attracted most attention in this country of recent years is contained in the article "Gospels" in the 'Encyclopædia Biblica,' and is the work of Professor P. W. Schmiedel of Zurich.<sup>1</sup> On the subject of the credibility of the Gospels he admits the dictum that when a profane historian finds before him a historical document which testifies to the worship of a hero unknown to other sources, he attaches first and foremost importance to those features which cannot be deduced merely from the fact of this worship, and does so on the simple and sufficient ground that they would not be found in this source unless the author had met with them as fixed data of tradition. The same fundamental principle may be applied to the Gospels, for they are all of them written by worshippers of Jesus. In the application of this principle there are, first and foremost, two great facts to be recognised,—that Jesus had compassion for the multitude, and that He preached with power, not as the Scribes. Schmiedel having laid down this

<sup>1</sup> The article is divided between Professor Schmiedel and Dr Edwin A. Abbott, the latter of whom deals mainly with the external evidence. It is with the Synoptic Gospels that Schmiedel is concerned in this article. He deals with JOHN separately, under the head of the Gospel by him.

principle, proceeds to examine some of the leading points in the Synoptic Gospels, and devotes a large amount of attention to the miracles. As regards miracles, he does not say they are impossible, but as his examination goes to show that all of them, notably the great miracle of the Resurrection, are incredible, the result is that they must be rejected.

"The foregoing sections," he goes on to say, "may have sometimes seemed to raise a doubt whether any credible elements are to be found in the Gospels at all." He, therefore, desires to lay emphatic stress upon certain passages which form the foundation pillars for an absolutely scientific life of Jesus. The absolutely credible passages are nine in number—five about Jesus in general, and four about His miracles. As they conform to the criterion of historical credibility already referred to, and are not of a kind to glorify the "hero" Jesus, Schmiedel considers that there is no good reason for refusing them credence. He is aware that a dogmatic motive may be imputed to him, but he calls attention to the statements as at least facts in the record. The five sayings attributed to Jesus are: "Why callest thou Me good? None is good save God alone" (Mark x. 18); "Whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever shall speak against

the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him" (Matt. xii. 32); "Of that day or that hour knoweth no man, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father" (Mark xiii. 32); "When His friends heard it, they went out to lay hold on Him, for they said, He is beside Himself" (Mark iii. 21); and "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (Mark xv 34). The four passages relating to miracles (Mark viii. 12, Mark vi. 5, Mark viii. 14-21, Matt. xi. 5) are taken by Schmiedel as showing that in reality our Lord gave no countenance to the working of miracles, and declined to perform them; but in order to reach any such conclusion he has to adopt the method of interpretation which we have reprobated in Paulus. In the last reference (Matt. xi. 5), where Jesus, in His answer to the messengers of John the Baptist, follows the enumeration of miracles—sight given to the blind, strength to the lame, hearing to the deaf, and life to the dead—with the statement that the poor have the Gospel preached to them, Schmiedel declares that Jesus was then speaking not of the physically but of the spiritually blind, lame, leprous, deaf, dead. Such exegesis is the expedient of despair.

To suppose, as it is easy to do, on a cursory reading of Schmiedel's article, that those nine passages were all that he found credible in the

Gospels would be to do him some injustice. He admits that the purely religious-ethical utterances of Jesus offer a field for credible passages, and they are to be accepted so long as they do not violate the axiom of historical credibility already laid down. "Here," he says, "we have a wide field of the wholly credible in which to expatiate, and it would be of immense advantage for theology were it to concentrate its strength upon the examination of these sayings and not attach so much importance to the minute investigation of the other less important details of the Gospel history." Moreover, he claims that these nine passages at least prove the real existence of Jesus, and satisfy us that the Gospels contain a few absolutely trustworthy facts concerning Him. "If passages of this kind," he says, "were wholly wanting in them, it would be impossible to prove to a sceptic that any historical value whatever was to be assigned to the Gospels; he would be in a position to declare the picture of Jesus contained in them to be purely a work of phantasy, and could remove the Person of Jesus from the field of history, all the more when the meagreness of the historical testimony regarding Him, whether in canonical writings outside the Gospels, or in profane writers such as Josephus, Tacitus, Suetonius, and Pliny, is considered."

Professor Schmiedel concedes that Jesus is a historical figure. But the Christ whom he leaves to us after his manipulation of the Gospel records is not the Christ of St Paul, or of the Apostles, or of the early Church. A Christ who never rose from the tomb could never have kindled the faith in which martyrs died, and a Christ who was only the weak and fallible man whom Schmiedel makes Him out to be could never have won the trust and the love and the adoring worship of Christians. Schmiedel's critical procedure in reaching his negative conclusions is marked by the most arbitrary assumptions and an unlimited subjectivity. His assumption that miracles are incredible is one which vitiates his whole treatment of the Evangelists, and prevents him from recognising in them veracious narrators of facts or anything else than blundering craftsmen in the field of literature. He finds contradictions and discrepancies where the open-minded reader sees just those natural variations which are a proof of reality and truth. In many instances the objections he takes are positively childish and trivial, and one wonders how he can account for writings characterised by so many obvious defects and obscurities having attained to the dignity of literature at all. Schmiedel is bound to have great difficulty in showing how the disciples came to deify a man who had just been

crucified; and he and all who agree with him, in rejecting the Resurrection and in asserting the mere humanity of Jesus, find it difficult to show how the Church arose so early as it did, and Christianity became the religion of the Empire.

This is a difficulty which presses hard upon Professor Pfleiderer of Berlin, whose views of Christianity and the Gospels have become well known in this country. His position as Gifford Lecturer in Edinburgh University has given his views a currency and a prestige beyond what their merits deserved. Not only his Gifford Lectures, but his ‘Primitive Christianity’ (in a second edition) and ‘Christian Origins’ are circulating in an English dress. It seems doubtful whether he would admit so much of the historical in the Gospels and in the Person of Jesus as Schmiedel. He opens his ‘Primitive Christianity’ with the somewhat ambiguous and not very hopeful sentence: “However much we may regret that we have so little certain knowledge regarding the first beginnings of Christianity, the fact itself can hardly be disputed.” “We have no historical knowledge,” he says, “of the childhood and youth of Jesus, for the narratives in Matthew and Luke are religious legends of no historical value.” The baptism of Jesus, with which St Mark opens his Gospel, followed by St Matthew and St Luke, is self-evidently not history

but legend, "one of the first steps in the development of the Christ-speculations of the Christian congregation." "The Gospel passage by which Christ is supposed to have made bread and wine at the last supper the symbols of His dead body and shed blood" belongs to the utterances which have been subsequently put into His mouth. These words originated in the Apostle Paul's mystical teaching of the sacrificial death of Christ and its sacramental celebration in the Communion. This is just the doctrine of Strauss and Baur sixty years ago. Pfleiderer, indeed, still maintains that St John's Gospel was written in the second century, as late as 140 A.D. "In order to estimate correctly the true value of this Gospel, we should not seek in it a historical work, which it did not at all mean to be. It was rather a didactic way of writing which had clothed its theological thoughts in the form of a life of Jesus." This character he attributes to the Gospel, and this late date he assigns to it in the teeth of the undoubted references to St John's Gospel in the literature of the second century before 120 A.D. Of the miraculous he will have none. The Resurrection is to him as incredible as it is to Strauss or Schmiedel, but his attempts to explain the acceptance of it by the first disciples are as impotent as theirs. Seeing that he ascribes the creation of the character of Jesus to theological

reflection and the workings of the early Church consciousness, it is not easy to see how there came to be on his principles any Christianity to discuss. How, again, are we to bridge the gulf which yawns broad and deep between such a Jesus as Pfeiderer gives us and the Christianity which is the one creative force known to the Roman Empire a century or even half a century later? To this question he has no answer. "He heaps up laboriously," says Dr Albert Schweitzer<sup>1</sup> in his clever but unsatisfying volume on the History of the Writing of Lives of Christ, "wood, hay, stubble, but where the fire is to come from to kindle the mass to the faith of the primitive Church he is unable to make clear."

The *ne plus ultra* of negation at the present time has been reached by Kalthoff, who laboured as a pastor in Bremen, North Germany, till his death in the end of 1906. He denied altogether the historical existence of Jesus. He was not the first to have gone to this extreme, for Bruno Bauer, more than fifty years ago, had reached the same depth, and he had been followed by Pierson and Naber and some of the more irresponsible critics of the Dutch school. Nor was Kalthoff altogether singular in his extreme conclusions among modern writers, for J. Macdonald Robertson, in his 'Christianity and Mythology,'

<sup>1</sup> Von Reimarus zu Wrede, p. 311.

and William Benjamin Smith, an American scholar, writing in Germany under the patronage of Schmiedel, in his 'Der vorchristliche Jesus,' have both denied the historical existence of Jesus. In his 'Christusproblem,' published in 1902, and his 'Entstehung des Christentums,' 1904, Kalthoff sets forth his views regarding the origin of Christianity. In his view, Christianity arose out of the impact of Jewish Messianic expectations and worldly ambitions upon the discontent and social misery of Rome under the Emperors. There is no problem of the life of Jesus, only a Christ problem. Jesus of Nazareth never lived, or, if he was one of the numerous Jewish Messiahs who met the death of the cross, at least he never founded Christendom. The history of Jesus given in the Gospels is in reality only the history of the rise of the portrait of Christ: in fact, the history of the Church coming into existence. Kalthoff fell out with the modern conception of the historical Jesus because he could find no way through from the life of Jesus to primitive Christianity. If, then, we cannot find our way from Jesus to the early Church, why, he reasoned, should we not try to find the way from the early Church back to Him? Himself a keen social reformer, Kalthoff presented a secularised Christ, as he called Him, to the men of his generation: a Christ who was intended to

infuse new vitality into the old type of Christ conceived by the Church. It was this Christ, without any semblance of historical reality, which, according to his view, became the foundation upon which the Church is built and the fountainhead from which Christianity flows. It is hard to believe that any man holding office in the Church of Christ could in his sober senses have framed such a conception of Christendom, Christianity, and Christ. Yet his extravagances serve as a *reductio ad absurdum* of theories regarding Christ and the Gospels, which are supported by names more worthy of respect, but which leave us in the end where he leaves us, with an ideal figure destitute of historical reality. As to the whole tendency and principles of such criticism, we may quote the words of a recent Gifford Lecturer of the University of Edinburgh, an English scholar of great learning and practical sagacity. In his lectures on 'The Knowledge of God,' Professor Gwatkin<sup>1</sup> says: "Critical methods like these will turn any history into romance. As feats of paradox they are altogether admirable; but when they are laid before us as the ripest results of modern historical research, we are compelled to make our protest in the name of truth and sanity against this astounding licence of reckless theorising, forced in-

<sup>1</sup> ii. 52.

terpretations, contempt of evidence, and systematic disregard of common-sense."

There is one feature common to almost all those extravagant critical theories. They place the Gospels late in the early Christian history, in order that there may be room, in the interval between Christ and the time of their composition, for the exercise of theological reflection and for the interaction of Christianity and pagan influences, for the accretion of miraculous and legendary incidents, and for that transformation of the early and more simple Christian tradition which is one of the fundamental assumptions of the negative critics. Pfleiderer,<sup>1</sup> for instance, is not out of place when he dates St Mark's Gospel about 70 A.D.; but when he places St Luke in the beginning of the second century, and St John in its fourth decade, and asserts that St Matthew is not the work of a single author, but that "generations of early Christianity"<sup>2</sup> worked at it, we see the pressure of the presuppositions under which he labours.

The contention of the present course of lectures is, that the Four Gospels are authentic and trustworthy productions of the Apostolic age,—that they have come down to us practically unchanged from the hands of their Apostolic authors, and that their influence can be traced, individually

<sup>1</sup> *Christian Origins*, p. 222.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 243.

and collectively, from a very early time, moulding the spiritual life, and intellectual development, and social and missionary activities of the rapidly extending Christian Church. There may be critics so bent on the rejection of the supernatural that they will, even after this contention is established, refuse to admit the credibility of the Gospel histories; but we may confidently leave their objections to be dealt with by the intelligence and common-sense of mankind. Let it once be shown that the Four Gospels are contemporary records and contain a sober and consistent history of the life, teaching, and work of Christ, and many questions now in dispute will be brought nearer to a settlement, if not finally answered.

We begin our investigation of the early Christian literature with the close of the second century, to ascertain how the Four Gospels were regarded in the Church at that epoch of its history.

We shall then, working backwards, trace the Gospel collection of Four, following the earliest indications of its existence and use, upwards, as we believe, to the very threshold of the Apostolic age.

We shall also, in the same order, investigate the traces of the use and influence and authority of the individual Gospels, devoting attention to some of the special problems in the external evidence which have not yet received a final settlement at the hands of the critics.

## CHAPTER III.

## THE FOUR GOSPELS ABOUT 200 A.D.

IN presenting the evidence for the Four Gospels from the earliest Church history and the earliest Christian literature, there is a certain advantage in proceeding in reverse chronological order. We take as our starting-point the close of the second century, when the Gospels were fully accepted and acknowledged, and trace them upwards towards the Apostolic age and the time assigned by immemorial Christian tradition for their composition. This course may involve a certain amount of overlapping and repetition, but it is of consequence to be able to start from a fixed point at which all are agreed that the Four Gospels were in existence and were regarded as authoritative Holy Scripture.

By the close of the second century, with the exception of the Epistle to the Hebrews, the two shorter Epistles of St John, the Second Epistle of

St Peter, the Epistles of James and Jude, and the Apocalypse, all the books of the New Testament were acknowledged as apostolic and authoritative throughout the whole Church. The testimony of the great Fathers varied in respect of these disputed books; but the canon of the acknowledged books, including the Four Gospels, was established by their common consent.<sup>1</sup> The word "canon" was not yet in use as a designation of the New Testament writings. It was used from the middle of the second century in such expressions as ὁ κανὼν τῆς ἀληθείας, ὁ κανὼν τῆς πίστεως, designating the formulated confession of the Christian faith; and Clement of Alexandria speaks of the words of Jesus or the Gospel (*κατὰ τὸν κανόνα τοῦ εὐαγγελίου πολιτευσάμενος*) as a canon or rule of life. It was not till about the middle of the fourth century that it was expressly employed to describe the collection of books universally regarded as Holy Scripture. When it came into use, the designation "canonical" was found contrasted with "apocryphal,"—the books used and publicly read in the services of the Church being in this way distinguished from those which were hidden away and not brought forward for such use, but rather employed for their own purposes by schismatical and heretical communities. The great criterion

<sup>1</sup> Westcott, On the Canon, p. 344.

of canonical quality was the liturgical reading of the books in public worship. And the use of these books was required to meet the need of the Churches for edification by means of that which Jesus had done and said, as well as that which the Apostles and eminent teachers of the Apostolic age had taught. It was no decree of Church council, nor any direction emanating from Apostolic authority, which determined the canon of Scripture. It was not the head but the heart of the Church, and that heart guided by the Spirit of Truth Himself, which determined the books of the canon.

We see the process far advanced by the close of the second century. By this time the Apostolic writings were called by the name of New Testament (*καινὴ διαθήκη*), the very term giving them a position of authority and sacredness, and placing them on a level of equality with the writings of the Old; indicating, too, that the full development so long in process at last was reached. Specially treasured were the Gospels. They were the oftenest copied, as we know from the vast preponderance of manuscripts of them extant; they were the first to be translated into other tongues, as they are still the first to be given to converts from heathenism in the mission field. By the end of the second century our Four Gospels were regarded as of exclusive authority

in the Churches of Rome, Asia Minor, Syria, Palestine, Alexandria, North Africa, and Gaul. If there were, even later than this, references to the Gospel according to the Hebrews and the Gospel according to the Egyptians, implying that these works found some acceptance in the Churches of Palestine and Alexandria, yet their position was undoubtedly secondary, and their circulation and influence limited.

The Four Gospels were already appealed to, not only within the circles of orthodoxy, for the confirmation of Catholic faith, but also among heretical sects, whose representatives sought from them support for their peculiar tenets or fantastic speculations. Irenæus<sup>1</sup> says, "So well established are our Gospels that even teachers of error themselves bear testimony to them; even they rest their objections on the foundation of the Gospels." The Ebionite heretic, for example, had as his favourite Gospel St Matthew, while the Marcionite, at the opposite pole of doctrinal belief, accepted as his authority a mutilated St Luke. The Valentinian gnostics favoured St John,—the first commentary of all being that on St John by Heracleon, a follower of Valentinus. St Mark was acknowledged and used by more than one of the early gnostic sects. But though heretics accepted the Gospels of

<sup>1</sup> *Adversus Hæreses*, iii. 11. 7.

the Church, and never attributed them to other authors than those we know, they put their own interpretations upon their contents and obtained their own peculiar doctrines by manipulation and perversion of their teaching. It is certainly remarkable that the Valentinians, the Marcionites, and other gnostic sects, never advanced in support of their opinions a single narrative relating to the ministry of Jesus save what is found in the Gospels. It does not appear that they ascribed to Him a single sentence of any imaginable importance which our evangelists have not transmitted. It is true that the large heretical literature of the second century has come down to us only in fragments,—in passages preserved in the pages of Irenæus, Hippolytus, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen, who devoted treatises to the refutation of heresies. But we know enough of their works to be sure of their general attitude. The Docetic author of the ‘Gospel of Peter’ imparts his own colouring to the Evangelic record, but adheres to the narrative. Marcion and the sect which he founded made use of a recension of St Luke; but we ascertain from the copious references of Tertullian in his treatise ‘Against Marcion,’ that it differed from our canonical St Luke only by the omissions which Marcion had made. Tertullian, again, expressly declares that

Valentinus used all our Four Gospels. Whilst the heretical sects, with their tendencies to exaggeration and extremes in matters of doctrine, had their favourites, lending some countenance to their peculiar views, within the Church itself the Four Gospels were already venerated and held to be sacred. They were accepted as Apostolic writings, as precious and veracious records of the life of Jesus, and as an authoritative rule of faith and practice.

The epoch which we have chosen as a starting-point for our investigation is no longer in the obscurity which makes certainty so difficult to attain in the early decades of the second century. It stands rather in the broad daylight of a large and unquestioned Christian literature which has survived to us. It was an epoch, in fact, of great activity in the history of Christian literature. To the last two decades of the second century belong Theophilus of Antioch and Irenæus of Lyons. Theophilus is the first who quotes a Gospel by the name of its writer. Writing in 180 A.D. to his friend Autolycus, he refers to what the Holy Scriptures teach, and all the inspired men (*οἱ πνευματοφόροι*), of whom John says: “In the beginning was the Word” (John i. 1). About 185 A.D. there is the great treatise of Irenæus ‘Against Heresies.’ In the first decades of the third century there are

the commentaries and other works of Hippolytus, notably his work 'Against all Heresies,' long known as the 'Philosophumena,' and attributed to Origen. To the same epoch belongs Tertullian, whose surviving works are numerous and varied, and whose anti-heretical writings in particular are a mine of information. These three writers are specially of value for details they have preserved of the systems of early heretics, and for the quotations they give from their works, enabling us to judge for ourselves what books of the New Testament those heretics knew and accepted. Two greater names remain as representative of this epoch—Clement of Alexandria and Origen,—both associated with the famous Catechetical School of that ancient city, and both writers who devoted themselves to the setting forth of the truths of the Christian system in terms of the science and philosophy of the day. We shall here content ourselves with brief notices of the testimony of Origen (186-253 A.D.), Clement of Alexandria (165-220 A.D.), and Tertullian (160-240 A.D.)

ORIGEN was the scholar of Clement of Alexandria, and at a very early age succeeded him as head of the famous Catechetical School. His learning and his industry were colossal. His literary fertility was remarkable, even if we regard the six thousand books credited to him by

Epiphanius as a great exaggeration. None of the early Fathers equalled him in originality, and the Church, which did not fully trust him, has been compelled to acknowledge him as her greatest theologian before Augustine. He founded the Catechetical School of Cæsarea, and travelled over the East more than any other scholar of his time. He is said to have written on every book of Scripture. There are still preserved considerable portions of his homilies on St Luke in Jerome's translation, and of his commentaries on St Matthew and St John,—several books partly in Greek and partly in Latin translations. Remarking upon the sinister meaning of the word “have taken in hand,” “attempted” (*ἐπεχείρησαν*), in St Luke's preface to his Gospel, and finding in it a latent charge of haste and lack of spiritual endowment in the writers of the narratives referred to, Origen goes on to say: “Matthew did not ‘make an attempt,’ but wrote, being moved by the Holy Spirit; likewise also, Mark and John, similarly also, Luke. The Gospel inscribed ‘according to the Egyptians’ and the Gospel inscribed as ‘of the Twelve’ the compilers ‘attempted.’ And there is also in circulation the Gospel according to Thomas. Basilides likewise already dared to write a Gospel according to Basilides.<sup>1</sup> Many therefore made attempts,

<sup>1</sup> See, however, p. 231.

and there is the Gospel according to Matthias and several others. But Four alone the Church of God approves." Eusebius<sup>1</sup> records another statement equally clear and explicit: "In the first book of his commentaries on Matthew, preserving the rule of the Church, he testifies that he knows only Four Gospels, writing to this effect — 'I have learned by tradition concerning the Four Gospels which alone are uncontested in the Church of God spread under heaven, that the Gospel according to Matthew, who was once a publican, but afterwards an Apostle of Jesus Christ, was written first; that according to Mark, second; that according to Luke, third; that according to John last of all.'" We are not required to adopt Origen's view of the priority of St Matthew to St Mark, which has been rendered doubtful by internal evidence, but we are well entitled to accept his statement regarding the authorship of the several Gospels. Whilst, therefore, Origen is aware of the existence of other Gospels which he names, and has no objection, any more than Clement and others, that apocryphal and pseudepigraphic, even heretical, writings should be read, he is quite decided in the affirmation that for the public services of the Church only the Four have from any time which he can remember been allowed.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> H. E., VI. 25.

<sup>2</sup> Zahn, *Grundriss der Geschichte des N. T. Kanons*, p. 17.

Origen, however, furnishes us with the testimony of an earlier writer which is of special importance. We have his ‘Apology in Reply to Celsus’ in eight books complete. This work has been called “the most perfect apologetic performance, from the standpoint of the Christianity of the early Church,” which we possess. The ‘True Word’ of Celsus, to which it is a reply, shows on the part of the heathen philosopher a considerable acquaintance with Christianity and its records. Origen takes for granted that Celsus had the Gospels before him, and the passages of Celsus which he has occasion to quote show that he was acquainted with all our canonical Gospels. Origen suggests that Celsus derived his view that the Apostles of Christ were notoriously wicked men from a passage in the Epistle of Barnabas, referring to the saying of our Lord that He came not to call the righteous but sinners. However that may be, the silence of Celsus as to other Gospels, and his exclusive, or almost exclusive, references to the contents of our canonical Gospels, go far to show that when he wrote his attack, about 176 A.D., they were held among Christians to be of exclusive and paramount authority.

We are indebted to Origen also for references to the Commentary on St John by Heracleon, the Valentinian heretic about 160 A.D.<sup>1</sup> In his own

<sup>1</sup> See p. 37.

Commentary on St John's Gospel, Origen quotes Heracleon's work more than fifty times, commenting as freely upon Heracleon as upon St John. It is scarcely possible to exaggerate the value of the testimony of Origen, living at an epoch of the Church's history, knowing by travel the communities of Church life in many different countries, and furnished with true reverence of spirit and all the aids of history, criticism, and philosophy.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA, the immediate predecessor of Origen at the head of the Catechetical School, himself succeeded Pantænus, and continued to preside over it from 189 to 219 A.D. His three chief works are—‘An Exhortation to the Heathen’ (*Προτρεπτικὸς πρὸς Ἑλληνας*), an apologetic treatise; the ‘Instructor’ (*Παιδαγωγός*), an unsystematic but tolerably complete repertory of Christian ethics; and the ‘Miscellanies’ (*Στρωματεῖς*), which have been described as an unmethodical digest of lectures actually delivered in the Catechetical School. These treatises form a kind of introduction to Christianity for the benefit of all, whether Christian believers or heathen inquirers, who desired to receive further instruction or to understand Christian thought. Out of numerous other works which came from his hand only one small tract has been preserved—‘Who is the

Rich Man that shall be Saved ?' It is in this last that we find the story of St John of Ephesus and the young robber. These works of Clement exhibit immense erudition. They abound in quotations, and references both to Pagan and to Christian authors. The whole domain of Greek literature was perfectly at his command—Homer, Hesiod, Pythagoras, and Plato he quotes copiously. With all his learning, however, he shows no acquaintance with the literature of ancient Rome. With early Christian literature he was well acquainted, and he had read for himself the writings of Tatian, Melito of Sardis, and Irenæus.

It is from Eusebius, however, who has preserved a statement from his lost 'Outlines' (*Τποτνπώσεις*), that we obtain the clearest and directest account of his view of the Gospels.<sup>1</sup> "Again, in the same book, Clement has set down the tradition of the elders of former days concerning the order of the Gospels, which is to this effect. They were wont to say that of the Gospels those containing the genealogies (Matthew and Luke) were written first. And as regards Mark, they said this was the plan: Peter having preached the word publicly in Rome, and having spoken forth the Gospel by the Spirit, many of those who were then in Rome

<sup>1</sup> Euseb. H. E., VI. 14.

requested Mark, as one who had attended him for long and remembered what had been said, to commit to writing what had been spoken; and that having composed his Gospel, he communicated it to them at their request. This becoming known to Peter, he neither forbade it nor encouraged it; but John, last, perceiving that the outward life of Christ ( $\tauὰ σωματικά$ ) had been detailed in the Gospel, being encouraged by his intimates, under the inspiration of the Spirit, composed a spiritual Gospel." This account of the relation of St Mark's Gospel to St Peter differs somewhat from that given by Irenæus, but the substantial truth of the tradition is not thereby affected. That Clement regarded the Four Gospels which we now possess as of exclusive authority is not inconsistent with the habit of this great and learned Father in quoting other Gospels and in referring to Clement of Rome, Barnabas, Hermas, the Apocalypse and Preaching of Peter, and the Didache, as Scripture. It cannot be denied that his practice in this respect is the freest of all the Fathers. This may come of the very width of his reading or of the largeness of his sympathies. He finds a parallel to sayings in the Theætetus of Plato and in the traditions of Matthias in the Gospel to the Hebrews, where it is written, "He that hath wondered shall rule and he that hath at-

tained to rule shall rest." He quotes an apocryphal question of Salome to our Lord, with the answer of our Lord thereto, and proceeds: "We do not find the saying in the Four Gospels which have been handed down to us, but in the Gospel according to the Egyptians." The very form of his statement makes it plain that Clement draws a distinction between our Four Canonical Gospels and this apocryphal Gospel according to the Egyptians.<sup>1</sup> When we remember the extraordinary learning of Clement and his wide literary sympathies, we need not wonder at his somewhat loose practice in making quotations from Holy Scripture, and we may confidently assume from the clear and explicit references which we find in his works that his Gospel canon was exactly that which we ourselves acknowledge.

TERTULLIAN (160-220 A.D.) is one of the most original figures in the early history of the Church

<sup>1</sup> In his pamphlet entitled 'Das neue Testament um das Jahr 200,' published in 1889, immediately after Zahn's first volume on the Canon (first half) appeared, Professor Harnack handled Zahn's claim of a closed canon at that date very severely, and laid great stress upon the loose practice of Clement of Alexandria in the matter of quotations. In a vigorous and learned rejoinder, called 'Einige Bemerkungen zu Adolf Harnack's Prüfung,' and in the succeeding portions of his great work on the Canon, Zahn has fully vindicated his position, and shown that in reference to the ecclesiastical authority and completeness of the New Testament collection Clement was essentially in the same position as the other Fathers, whose practice of quotation was more strict.

—the fiery Presbyter of Carthage, lawyer, controversialist, orator, and scholar. His reading in classical literature was extensive, and his works are a storehouse of antiquarian lore, conveying much information regarding the history, the social life, and the religious ceremonies both of Greece and Rome. He quotes, for example, from the ‘ Histories ’ of Tacitus, and calls that historian *ille mendaciorum loquacissimus*.<sup>1</sup> He has references to the “ Phædo ” and the “ Timæus ” among the Dialogues of Plato, and shows himself well acquainted with the Platonic philosophy. Eusebius describes him as a man versed in the Roman law, and his writings prove his skill as a pleader and his acquaintance with legal terminology. He grew up in heathenism, and was already in his mature manhood when he was converted to Christianity in 192 A.D. In later life he attached himself to the Montanist movement, which had many attractions for an ardent and impulsive nature like his. His writings were voluminous,—apologetic, doctrinal, and practical. What Origen was to Greek Christianity, Tertullian was to Latin, even though his works did not attain to anything like the number of Origen’s. He was the first who set himself systematically to explain the doctrines of Christianity in the Latin which was vernacular to the North African

<sup>1</sup> *Apologeticus adv. Gentes*, xvi. 1.

peoples, and it is from him that the expressions *redemption*, *justification*, *sanctification*, and many others in the vocabulary of ecclesiastical theology, have come.

To Tertullian the New Testament already is on a level with the Old. He speaks of the Law and the Gospel, of the Law and the Gospels, of the Law and the Prophets, and the Gospel and Apostolic writings, thus distinguishing the Old Testament from the New, and placing the New on an equality with the Old. He speaks of both Testaments, of the entire canon (*instrumentum*) of both Testaments, of two canons or testaments. He expressly prefers<sup>1</sup> the designation *instrumentum* to *testamentum* ("instrumenti vel quod magis usui est dicere testamenti"), although the latter is in more general use. The remark in the foregoing parenthesis shows that among his Latin contemporaries Tertullian found *testamentum* already in use to describe the Christian Scriptures. Zahn<sup>2</sup> bids us not think of his use of the word as forensic, as if Tertullian considered the *instrumenta* to be documents in the process between himself and the heretics. The Apostolic writings were to him in their collective form, first and foremost, instruments of instruction without which preaching was impossible. We find, in fact, the expression *instrumentum prædicationis*.

<sup>1</sup> Adv. Marcionem, iv. 1.

<sup>2</sup> GK. i. 110.

The *instrumenta* were the indispensable tools of the preacher and the theologian. He speaks of the Four Gospels as the *instrumentum evangelicum*, contrasting them with the *singularitas instrumenti* of Marcion, who had as his Gospel the one mutilated Gospel of Luke. *Nostrum evangelium* is with him the whole Four as commonly received, and *commune instrumentum* is the Gospel record in so far as his and Marcion's agree.

It is in his great treatise 'Against Marcion' that we find the clearest pronouncements of Tertullian regarding the Gospels, and, as we shall see later, we can determine the character of the Gospel favoured by Marcion from the copious quotations made in his refutation of the heretic. With him the title-deeds of the Church are the Scriptures guaranteed by the signature of Christ and the witness of the Apostles. He insisted on the value of the traditions handed down by Apostles and the churches which they founded. "If it is acknowledged that that is more true which is more ancient, that more ancient which is even from the beginning, that from the beginning which is from the Apostles, it will in like manner assuredly be acknowledged that what has been preserved inviolate in the Churches of the Apostles has been derived by tradition from the Apostles. Let us see what milk the Corinthians drank from

Paul; to what rule the Galatians were recalled by his reproofs; what is read by the Philippians, the Thessalonians, the Ephesians; what is the testimony of the Romans who are nearest to us, to whom Peter and Paul left the Gospel, a gospel sealed with their own blood. We have, moreover, churches founded by John. For even if Marcion rejects his Apocalypse, still, the succession of bishops, if traced to its source, will rest upon the authority of John. And the noble descent of other churches is recognised in the same manner. I say, then, that among them, and not only among the Apostolic Churches, but among all the churches, the Gospel of Luke, which we earnestly defend, has been maintained from its first publication." And "the same authority of the Apostolic Churches will uphold the other Gospels which we have in due succession through them and according to their usage, I mean those of [the Apostles] Matthew and John; although that which was published by Mark may also be maintained to be Peter's, whose interpreter Mark was; for the narrative of Luke also is generally ascribed to Paul: since it is allowable that what scholars publish should be regarded as their Master's work."<sup>1</sup> "We maintain, first and foremost, the evangelical instrument to have

<sup>1</sup> *Adv. Marcionem*, iv. 5.

Apostles for its authors, upon whom this office of proclaiming the Gospel has been imposed by the Lord Himself; if also it has Apostolic men among its authors, it has them not alone, but with Apostles and after Apostles, because the preaching of the disciples might have been suspected of vainglory, if the authority of the masters did not support it, nay, the authority of Christ, who made the Apostles their masters. Therefore, John and Matthew from the Apostolic band instil faith into us; Luke and Mark of the number of Apostolic men establish it.”<sup>1</sup> From these quotations we see that Tertullian not only had the Four Gospels, but had them in an order of his own: John, Matthew, Luke, and Mark, differing very little from that of the Western witnesses to the New Testament text, which is Matthew, John, Luke, and Mark.

At the close of the second century the Church already possessed a New Testament alongside of the Old. Its books were like those of the Old Testament, “Scripture,” or “the Scriptures,” or “the Divine Scriptures.” They were the works of Spirit-moved men (*πνευματοφόροι*).<sup>2</sup> Not the Gospels alone were “Dominical writings” (*αἱ κυριακαὶ γραφαὶ*), but the Old and New Testaments. “The constant use of this designation for the whole Bible by

<sup>1</sup> Adv. Marcionem, iv. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Theophilus ad Autol., ii. 22.

Irenæus, Clement, and the later Africans," says Zahn, "proves that thereby from the beginning it was not a contrast to the writings of the Old Testament that was intended to be expressed, but rather the strong consciousness of the fact that Christ, the Lord, is the Alpha and Omega of all true Revelation, and even of all the records preserving it. Not only does the Old Testament witness of Christ, but Christ Himself speaks through the Prophets; His Spirit, or the Logos not yet manifested in the flesh, has inspired them. Thus is He the Creator and Dispenser of all Holy Scripture. It was, therefore, more than an external fact; it was the universal conviction of the Church regarding the true origin of all Holy Scripture hidden from Jews and heretics, and of the inner connection resting upon that origin, which the Christians of that time expressed, when they called them not only the Lord's writings, but also their writings, or the distinctively Christian literature."<sup>1</sup> This was no other than Luther's doctrine of inspired Scripture—"was Christum treibt"—what deals with Christ.

The existence, at this epoch, of EARLY VERSIONS of the New Testament Scriptures is a notable fact in the history of the Canon.

<sup>1</sup> GK. i. 98.

The claim of Christianity to be the true religion, to possess the one full and satisfying revelation of God to man, to set forth the one and only Saviour of mankind,—carries with it the obligation to make its Holy Scriptures, containing the message of life eternal, known to all mankind. The sense of such an obligation, even if not so highly developed, in the Jewish people, who were possessed of God's earlier revelation, led to the execution of the first translation of all, the Septuagint Version of the Old Testament. Of this obligation, although it may not have taken formulated expression, the Church early became conscious. The sense of it fell low in the Middle Ages, but the Reformation, with its assertion of the right of private judgment, gave it new and vastly extended application. Wherever the first Apostles and their successors carried the good news of Christ beyond the bounds of the Greek-speaking world, one of the first necessities they had to meet was the demand for the record of God's revelation of Himself, and of that revelation in Christ, in the vernacular speech of the newly evangelised peoples. And we may be sure that of the New Testament Scriptures, the demand for the Gospels would be the first, as it still is in every mission-field.

There are three versions which go back to a

very high antiquity,—the Syriac, the Latin, and the Coptic or Egyptian versions. The tendency of recent research goes to show that it was in the valley of the Euphrates, in Edessa or Nisibis of Syria, rather than in the more conspicuous cities of the Roman Empire, that the first version of the New Testament Scriptures was made. Professor Caspar René Gregory of Leipzig, an eminent authority in this field, tells us:<sup>1</sup> “These Syrian Christians undoubtedly made a Syriac New Testament very soon, as soon as they learned that there was a Greek New Testament. I think it most likely that they translated the books into Syriac before the end of the second century, and I regard it as possible that many of the books were translated before the end of the first century. It may be seen that the Syriac text had a special charm for them in the thought that it was almost precisely the language that Jesus had used as he went about from Galilee to Jerusalem and back again, to Perea, and to the neighbourhood of Tyre. In the place where our Bibles have an Aramaic expression, like ‘Rabbi,’ ‘Talitha cumi,’ the Syriac translation did not have, as the Greek has and as our Bibles have, a translation of these words, for they were Syriac already and every reader understood them.” The standard version

of the Syriac New Testament, the Peshitta, called for its excellence "the Queen of the Versions," is thought by some scholars to be as early as the latter half of the second century, but it is more generally believed to be the final form of the version, reached in the fifth century. But there are three recensions of the Syriac translation containing the Four Gospels which reach well up into the second century, the oldest of these being represented in the famous Syriac Sinaitic manuscript found on Mount Sinai in 1892 by Mrs Lewis. Although in the old Syriac Canon the Catholic Epistles and the Apocalypse were wanting, it is noteworthy that in the earliest Syriac versions the Four Gospels as we have received them, and these alone, are given. When the Syriac Sinaitic version was produced, perhaps not later than the middle of the second century, the Gospel according to the Hebrews and the Gospel according to the Egyptians had apparently disappeared from regular use, and the only Gospels considered indispensable and necessary for salvation were our Four Gospels, and these not in any primitive or rudimentary form, but as they are found in our standard evangelical exemplars.

The Latin and the Egyptian versions followed in no great space of time, although in connection with their origin, as with the Syriac, there are

many questions still under discussion. Of them it is true what has been said of the Syriac, that they represent our Gospels in the form in which they have come down to us from their Apostolic authors. The significant point in this inquiry is this, that the earlier those efforts at translation are dated, the earlier the sense within the Church of the sacredness and authority of the Gospels is seen to be. It was because this was the Word of God, and needful for salvation, that translation into vernacular speech, so as to be “understood” of the people, was resorted to. These versions all contained the Four Gospels and no other, though not always in the order to which we are accustomed. This shows that by the end of the second century, perhaps as early as the middle of it, the Churches outside of Palestine and Asia Minor, outside the boundaries of the Greek-speaking world, where these versions originated, were not then engaged in selecting a gospel or determining a creed: they already acknowledged, and used, and felt the necessity of translating into their vernacular for general use, the Fourfold Gospel which came from Apostles of Christ and their followers, and which was the bond of a common faith and hope to them all.

## CHAPTER IV.

## A GOSPEL COLLECTION—IRENÆUS.

WE have seen that at the close of the second century the Four Gospels were regarded as a sacred quaternion, and the conception of a “Fourfold Gospel” (*τετράμορφον εὐαγγέλιον*) had already taken root in widely separated quarters of the Church. From the Euphrates Valley to the shores of the western Mediterranean, and from Gaul to the borders of Ethiopia, the Church of Christ at that epoch acknowledged our Four Gospels as the source of her life and the foundation upon which she was content to rest.

But we can trace the collection of Four Gospels to a much earlier period than has yet been indicated. In fact, it is not sufficiently realised, despite the ample investigations of the last thirty years, how early this collection was brought together. It is well worth while following up the traces of a collection before discussing the Gospels one by one.

For this purpose, as well as for his testimony to individual gospels, no writer of the second century is better entitled to be heard than Irenæus, Bishop of Vienne and Lyons in the two last decades of the second century. There has been considerable discussion as to the date of his birth, which is of some consequence, as affecting his testimony to experiences of his early life; but in the meantime it will suffice to note that his great work, ‘Against Heresies,’ belongs to about the year 185 A.D. As a witness to Catholic usage and practice at this epoch, Irenæus had unusual qualifications; and no man had a larger acquaintance with the thought and speculation of his age.

1. *He had a lofty conception of the Church.*—He regarded her as the authorised custodian and interpreter of the Christian faith; and he attributed to the historic Apostolic Churches, and especially to the Church of Rome, the character of authentic depositaries of the genuine Christian tradition. It is with him that the idea of an Apostolical succession in the episcopate is believed to have originated: he is at least the first to give it formulated shape. Whatever we may think of his doctrinal and ecclesiastical positions, the literary and historical aspects of them are of great importance. For Irenæus, the sources of Christian truth are the teaching of Christ and

His Apostles, handed down, first by word of mouth and then by authoritative witnesses, the oral and the written tradition being in full accord. Apostolicity is with him the test of canonicity. Apostolic Churches being the authentic depositaries of tradition, the Four Gospels received and handed down by them through an unbroken succession are to him of exclusive and supreme authority. “To him,” it has been said, “belongs the distinction of stereotyping the genius of orthodoxy, and founding the Church’s polemic method. In an age when wild speculations were in the air, he adheres unswervingly to the Apostolic tradition, enticed from the safe path neither by the dancing lights of gnosticism nor by the steadier flame of Greek philosophic thought.”<sup>1</sup>

2. *He had an uncommonly wide acquaintance with the thought of his time.*—His great work, ‘Against Heresies,’ furnishes ample proof of this. For the intricacies of early gnostic speculation he is our greatest authority. Whilst his own orthodoxy has never been impeached, he has the credit of having given in his treatise a fair and trustworthy exposition of heretical views. He has a firm grasp of Scripture doctrine, and embodies in his book a large amount of sound and interesting exposition of Holy Scripture. “Any

<sup>1</sup> Cruttwell, Literary History of Early Christianity, ii. 374.

one," says Bishop Lightfoot, "who will take the pains to read Irenæus through carefully, endeavouring to enter into his historical position in all its bearings, striving to realise what he and his contemporaries thought about the writings of the New Testament, and what grounds they had for thinking it, and, above all, resisting the temptation to read in modern theories between the lines, will be in a more favourable position for judging rightly of the early history of the New Testament canon than if he had read all the monographs which have issued from the German press for the last half century."<sup>1</sup>

3. *He had a high doctrine of Inspiration.*—Speaking of the Old Testament, he says, "It was the Holy Spirit that preached through the prophets the dispensations" ( $\tauὰς οἰκονομίας$ ). Again, he says, "All the Scriptures being spiritual, both every Scripture given to us from God will be found by us harmonious, and through the variety of the expressions one harmonious melody will be perceived within us." With reference to the Gospels, he declares that, though "fourfold, they are held together by one Spirit." He describes the Apostles, after they had been clothed with the power of the Holy Spirit descending upon them from on high, as "being fully assured about all things, and possessing perfect knowledge."

<sup>1</sup> Essays on Supernatural Religion, iv. 141.

In a very interesting passage,<sup>1</sup> he remarks that St Matthew might have said that “the birth of Jesus was on this wise,” but that the Holy Spirit, foreseeing the depravers of the truth, and guarding against their fraud, said by St Matthew, “the birth of *Christ* was on this wise,” showing that He was both,—in other words, that Jesus was Christ from His birth. Thus, what might have seemed the accidental choice of one form of expression rather than another, is ascribed to the directing care of the Holy Spirit. Irenæus held not only the genuineness, but also the inspiration of the Gospels.

4. *He had a varied career in widely separated provinces of the Church.*—He could speak for the Church in Asia Minor, Rome, and Gaul, in all cases from personal experience. He was a native of Asia Minor, and in early youth came under the teaching and influence of Polycarp, the Bishop of Smyrna and disciple of John the Apostle. In a letter to Florinus, a fellow-disciple in the school of Polycarp, who had fallen into heresy, written in his later life and preserved in the pages of Eusebius, Irenæus refers to their early days together: “I remember the events of that time more clearly than those of recent years, so that I am able to describe the very place in which the blessed Polycarp sat as he discoursed,

<sup>1</sup> Against Heresies, iii. 16. 2.

and his goings out and his comings in, and the accounts which he gave of his intercourse with John and with the others who had seen the Lord. And as he remembered their words and what he heard from them concerning the Lord and concerning His miracles and His teaching, having received them from eyewitnesses of the Word of Life, Polycarp related all things in harmony with the Scriptures."<sup>1</sup> There was thus only the space of one life, that of Polycarp, between Irenæus and the Apostolic age—between him and the last survivor of the Apostles, who had leaned upon the Master's breast, and was the disciple whom Jesus loved. When, then, Irenæus refers to particulars in the life of our Lord as related by Polycarp, we have the assurance that the aged Bishop's reminiscences coincided with the accounts contained in the written Gospels, and *a fortiori* that written Gospels were in circulation as a standard for the knowledge of the life and teaching of Jesus in Irenæus's youth in Asia Minor.<sup>2</sup>

It was not in Smyrna, however, that the life-work of Irenæus was done. When we first hear

<sup>1</sup> Euseb. H. E., V. 20.

<sup>2</sup> Harnack's attempt to show that "the Scriptures," with which the reminiscences were in accord, were the Scriptures of the Old Testament, is unconvincing. See 'Das neue Testament um das Jahr 200,' p. 35. Cf. Zahn, GK. i. 169, n. 1; and Harnack, 'Chronologie,' p. 325 ff.

of him in his ecclesiastical relations, he is a presbyter of the Church at Lyons, in Southern Gaul. There is nothing remarkable in this, because Greek colonies from Asia Minor were early established in the valley of the Rhone, and there was much communication by commerce and otherwise between the mother community and the daughter down into Christian times. Whether Irenæus had spent some time at Rome before he settled in the west, there is no record to show. It has been held that his clear conception of the unity of the Catholic Church, his high estimate of Rome as the centre of Catholic tradition, and the eminently practical bent of his mind, all point to residence and labour in Rome before he settled for the work of his life in distant Gaul. However this may be, in 177 A.D., when a terrible persecution, sanctioned by Marcus Aurelius, the Roman Emperor, broke out in Gaul, Irenæus, then a presbyter, was entrusted with the famous Letter of the Churches of Vienne and Lyons to the brethren of the Churches of Asia and Phrygia, and carried it as far as Rome. Among the martyrs in that persecution was Pothinus, the bishop of Lyons, who had reached the patriarchal age of ninety years. The See being vacant, Irenæus was raised to the Episcopal office, the fact showing that he had been long

enough associated with the Church of Lyons to be marked out for the succession.

For a quarter of a century, till his death in 202, he occupied that exalted office, taking an active part in the movements and controversies of the times. His personal relations with Polycarp have been questioned, and his testimony to the credibility of the Gospel history has been disparaged by critics, who find these facts a serious obstacle to their negative theories. Such treatment only serves to bring out the importance of his position and the trustworthiness of his testimony. "Irenæus," says Professor Gutjahr,<sup>1</sup> in his acute and learned work on 'The Trustworthiness of the Testimony of Irenæus,' written to meet these attempts at depreciation, "was assuredly neither a troglodyte to whom human voice had never penetrated; nor the inhabitant of an island forgotten by the world, upon whose shores no wave of spiritual life ever breaks; nor a misanthropist recluse holding himself aloof from the ways of men; nor an indifferent creature lacking all interest in and all acquaintance with the questions of the time,—he was everything the very reverse. His life unfolded itself in the most important scenes and centres of ecclesiastical and religious life in Smyrna, in Rome, in Gaul, and he occupied for long the influential

<sup>1</sup> Glaubwürdigkeit des Irenäischen Zeugnisses, p. 14.

positions of presbyter and Bishop of Lyons. He stood in many-sided personal relations to the outstanding personalities of his generation, took the liveliest interest and the most active part in all the great controversies of the closing decades of the second century, the Paschal controversy, the Montanist controversy, and was in particular himself one of the foremost and most successful champions of truth against Gnostic error, as well as one of the most important witnesses and defenders of the New Testament canon."

The foregoing considerations give weight to any special judgment which Irenæus might deliver on the subject of the Gospels. It is in the Third Book of his treatise 'Against Heresies' that we have the fullest and most explicit account of the Gospel collection. He is the first of the early Fathers to condescend upon the names of all the Evangelists. "As it was in the power of the Holy Spirit," he says,<sup>1</sup> "that the Apostles preached, so it was in the same power that the Evangelists put the glad tidings on record." Matthew, he goes on to say, published a written Gospel among the Hebrews in their own language, while Peter and Paul were preaching at Rome and laying the foundations of the Church. And after their departure (*ἔξοδον*, which may mean "death"), Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, also handed

<sup>1</sup> *Adversus Hæreses*, iii. 1.

down in writing what had been preached by him. Luke, also, the companion of Paul, set down in a book the Gospel preached by him. Then John, the disciple of the Lord, who also leaned upon His breast, himself also published his Gospel while staying at Ephesus in Asia. "So firm is the ground upon which the Gospels rest that the very heretics themselves bear witness to them, and starting from them, each one of them endeavours to establish his own peculiar doctrine,"<sup>1</sup> again enumerating the Four Gospels and affirming their authorship. When we consider the learning and the critical acumen of Irenæus, as exhibited in his exposition and discussion of prevalent heresies; when we recall the facilities which he enjoyed for ascertaining accurate particulars of the history of the Apostles and those who were associated with them; when, moreover, we remember that he had to deal with opponents ready to question unfounded or unguarded statements, we may confidently believe that he knew whereof he spoke when he called Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John the authors of the Fourfold Gospel. It would require very strong and explicit evidence to overthrow the testimony of a witness with such qualifications for ascertaining and declaring the truth.

Irenæus knew the Four Gospels as the work

<sup>1</sup> *Adversus Hæreses*, iii. 11. 7.

of the authors he names, the same to whom tradition, from the second century to the nineteenth, has explicitly assigned them. But Irenæus goes further, and claims for them in clear and unmistakable terms exclusive authority. His description of the Fourfold Gospel is specially noteworthy. He is arguing that it is one and the same God, the Creator of heaven and earth, whom the Prophets foretold and the Gospels announced. In opposition to heretics, who held that the God of the Old Testament is inferior to the God of the New, he maintains that neither Prophets nor Apostles acknowledged any other Lord God save the Lord and God supreme; the Prophets and the Apostles alike confessing the Father and the Son, but reverencing no other as God and confessing no other as Lord. The Old Testament knows nothing of a God above the God of Israel who chose Jerusalem; and the New Testament as little of a Word descending upon Jesus at His baptism,—it knows only Jesus Christ, the Word who was made flesh and dwelt among us. To justify his contention, Irenæus turns to the Gospels in succession and vindicates his position from them. He then proceeds<sup>1</sup> to formulate his doctrine of the uniqueness and exclusiveness of the Gospel quaternion: “It is impossible that the Gospels can be either more or fewer in number

<sup>1</sup> *Adversus Hæreses*, iii. 11. 8.

than they are. For since there are four regions of the world in which we live, and also four principal winds, while the Church has been dispersed over the whole earth, and the Gospel is the pillar and ground of the Church and the breath of her life, it is fitting that she should have four pillars, from all quarters breathing incorruption, and rekindling the spiritual life of men. Whereby it is evident that the Artificer of all things, the Word who sitteth upon the cherubim and holdeth all things together, when He was manifested to men gave us the Gospel in four aspects, but held together by one Spirit. As David says, entreating the manifestation of His presence, ‘Thou that sittest between the cherubims, shine forth.’ For the cherubim were fourfold and their faces images of the dispensation ( $\tauῆς πραγματείας$ ) of the Son of God. For, as the Scripture saith, The first living creature was like a lion, symbolising His effectual working, and His leadership, and His royal estate; the second, like a calf, signifying His sacrificial and priestly office; the third, having the face of a man, evidently describing His advent as man; and the fourth, like a flying eagle, setting forth the gift of the Spirit resting upon the Church. The Gospels, therefore, are comparable to those figures among which Christ is seated. For the Gospel according to John relates His original, effectual, and glorious

generation from the Father, saying, ‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and was God.’ Also, ‘All things were made by Him, and without Him was nothing made.’ But the Gospel according to Luke, as being of a priestly character, began with Zacharias the priest offering incense to God. For already the fatted calf was being prepared which was to be slain in honour of the younger son. Matthew, again, proclaims His human birth, saying, ‘The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham,’ and, ‘Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise.’ This Gospel, therefore, is of human aspect; wherefore, also, through the whole of it, the character of a lowly-minded and meek man is maintained. Mark, on the other hand, commenced with a reference to the prophetic spirit, which came from on high upon men, saying, ‘The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as it is written in Esaias the prophet,’—pointing to the winged aspect of the Gospel, on which account he made his narrative concise and rapid, for this is the note of the prophetic character. . . . These things being so, all who destroy the form of the Gospel are vain and unlearned, and, moreover, audacious, representing the aspects of the Gospel as being either more or fewer than has been mentioned; the

former that they may appear to have discovered more than the truth, the latter that they may set the dispensations of God aside."

The importance of this testimony of Irenæus cannot well be overestimated. Although he wrote his treatise 'Against Heresies' about 185 A.D., it was not then for the first time that the Fourfold Gospel appealed to his judgment. He writes as if in the course of his long and varied career, doing battle against Gnosticism and Montanism, and building up the Church, in times of trial and persecution, on the truth of the Gospel, he had never known any other save the Four. Zahn is well entitled to say: "Irenæus did not employ empty words when he spoke of the Four Gospels as the pillars which from time immemorial have supported the fabric of the Catholic Church. So stood they without any rival in the churches of the land of his birth, as well as in those over which he was Bishop, and also in Rome, Carthage, Alexandria, and Antioch."<sup>1</sup>

It is evidence of the cardinal position which he occupies in the history of early Christian literature and of the New Testament canon, that great exertions have been put forth by the negative critics to break down his evidence or to explain it away.

i. Objection has been taken to the symbolism

<sup>1</sup> Zahn, GK. i. 192.

which he employs to describe and illustrate the Gospel collection of Four. It is said to be rather the fantastic conception of a dogmatist than the sober-minded testimony of a historian. But this is surely quite to misunderstand the object which Irenæus has in view. Symbolism is with him an afterthought. In another place<sup>1</sup> he shows how five can be a symbolic number, having a wide prevalence in the Scriptures—five loaves for the five thousand; five virgins wise and foolish; five men on the Mount of Transfiguration—Peter, James, John, Moses, Elias; five ages of human life—infancy, boyhood, youth, maturity, old age, and so on. It does not determine the Gospel quaternion, but is used in accordance with Oriental modes of expression to illustrate it. Irenæus found Four Gospels in possession of the field, each presenting its own view of the great Divine subject of them all, and all combining in a complete and harmonious presentation of the Godman so adequate to the spiritual requirements of the Church, that when he wished to find symbols for them he could find nothing more suitable, whether in things sacred or things secular, than the four faces of the cherubim, or the four living creatures of the Apocalypse, or the four quarters of the heavens, or the four principal

<sup>1</sup> Against Heresies, ii. 24. 4.

winds. There is nothing in the symbolism he employs to infer dogmatic or polemic purpose beyond what was perfectly legitimate; nothing certainly to disqualify him from being a trustworthy witness to fact.

2. Objection is taken to a remarkable statement of Irenæus<sup>1</sup> to the effect that Jesus did not die at the age of thirty or in His thirties, but attained an age between forty and fifty, thus having experience of all the gradations of human life. But this is not all. He backs up this remarkable statement by a reference to St John's Gospel, where the Jews say to Jesus, "Thou art not fifty years old and hast Thou seen Abraham?" and to the elders, who had consorted with St John in Asia, and who agreed in declaring that this was St John's view of the length of our Lord's life. When the context, in which these peculiar assertions appear, is examined, they are seen to be much less damaging to the credit of Irenæus than would appear at the first blush. He has been contesting the view of the Valentinians (a view held by several of the early Fathers and also held by some orthodox theologians to this day) that our Lord's ministry was really confined to a year, and that Jesus died at its close just as He completed His thirtieth year of earthly life. He

<sup>1</sup> Against Heresies, ii. 22.

meets this erroneous view, as he considers it, first, by a better exposition of the passage of St Luke, where Jesus speaks of "the acceptable year of the Lord"; secondly, by an enumeration of at least three annual Passover feasts which Jesus is represented as attending; thirdly, by the theoretical opinion that it behoved Jesus to reach the maturity of middle life, between forty and fifty, to do justice to His calling as the Perfect Teacher of mankind; and fourthly, by a reference to the passage in St John's Gospel, where the Jews express the opinion that our Lord had not reached fifty years. The theoretical argument of Irenæus appears to our ways of thinking unquestionably weak, but the imputation against his credibility as a historian would only be serious if on the one hand it implied ignorance of the Gospel narratives, or, on the other, it showed carelessness in reporting the statements of his authorities. As regards the latter, an examination of the passage discloses the fact that the only point affirmed by the Presbyters of Asia was that our Lord's ministry lasted more than a single year; and as regards the former, no one can read the treatise of Irenæus without finding on every page proofs of ample and accurate acquaintance with the Gospel history. Even if it be that in this passage Irenæus shows less than his wonted lucidity of statement, and perhaps more than his wonted

keenness as a controversialist, there is no ground for discrediting him as a historian.<sup>1</sup>

3. Objection is taken to the testimony of Irenæus on the ground that he was only a boy when he saw and heard Polycarp, and so failed to discern that Polycarp was the hearer not of John the Apostle but of another John, better known to modern criticism than to antiquity, John the Presbyter. Of this view Professor Harnack may be regarded as a strenuous representative. In his 'Chronology of the Early Christian Literature,'<sup>2</sup> he admits that Irenæus believed the John of whom Polycarp spoke to be the Apostle, but then he assumes that the memories of Irenæus are those of his childhood, and not to be relied upon when he records them in his old age. Harnack, however, puts a strain upon the language of the letter of Irenæus to Florinus which it will not bear. In that letter Irenæus speaks of himself as a lad (*παις*) when Florinus was out in the world and achieving success; he recalls to his erring companion, who had become a heretic, the lessons they had learned together at the feet of Polycarp, and speaks of them as if they had continued over a considerable time; and he claims an elderly man's privilege of remembering the lessons and

<sup>1</sup> See Lightfoot, Essays on Supernatural Religion, p. 246; Journal of Theological Studies, Oct. 1907, p. 53 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Chronologie, pp. 320 ff.; 656 ff.

events of youth better than the experiences of later years. In another place he testifies to having seen Polycarp in his first youth (*ἐν τῇ πρώτῃ ἡμένῳ ἡλικίᾳ*), that is, in his early manhood, and though we have no record to show that he had intercourse with him later, that does not exclude the possibility that he had. We may believe that if Professor Harnack had not felt himself under the necessity of holding to John the Presbyter as the author of the Fourth Gospel, he would not have pressed language so keenly to make Irenæus appear but a child when he heard Polycarp discoursing upon John, and as a child incapable of discriminating between the Apostle and the Presbyter. The language does not warrant any such inference, and, even if Irenæus had been so young as Harnack implies, we can scarcely believe that he had not conversed with companions, or others of more mature age, at a later time, able to correct the mistakes of his early days and to set him right on such a question. "We used to think," says Professor Gwatkin of Cambridge, "with Irenæus himself, that the memories of early life are the most indelible of all. When some trifle recalls them we often see them returning, even in extreme old age, with all the vividness and certainty of yesterday. Human nature must be much the same in all ages, and it was the life's work both

of Polycarp and Irenæus to keep the deposit entrusted to them. I see no escape from the conclusion that this is more than almost any other a question on which it is hardly in human nature that Irenæus can be mistaken, when he tells us that the Apostle John, and not another, was the teacher of his old master Polycarp.”<sup>1</sup>

4. It has nevertheless been questioned whether the assertion of Irenæus, attributing exclusive authority to these Four Gospels, holds good for the whole Church at this early period. In Alexandria, as we have seen, Clement, writing early in the third century, seems to draw a distinction between what is handed down in our Four Gospels and what is circulated in other Gospels; but he regards with favour the Gospel according to the Egyptians and the Gospel according to the Hebrews; and he quotes also apocryphal sayings of Jesus that were still current in the Church. Harnack will have it<sup>2</sup> that the Gospel according to the Egyptians is no heretical production, but a Gospel which had established itself from the beginning in Egypt. For this he brings but the scantiest proof, and Zahn is right in maintaining<sup>3</sup> that the Church of Alexandria had about

<sup>1</sup> Contemporary Review, 1897, p. 222. See also Stanton, Gospels, p. 213 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Das neue Testament um das Jahr 200 A.D.; Altchristliche Literatur, p. 12.

<sup>3</sup> GK. i. 176. Comp. Einige Bemerkungen.

200 A.D. no other Gospel than the Churches of Rome and Carthage and Lyons. If Clement is more free in his Scripture references than some of the other Fathers, this is due more to the peculiar bent of his mind than to a different condition of things. Just as Clement's theology "is not a unit but a confused eclectic mixture of the true Christian elements with many Stoic, Platonic, and Philonic ingredients,"<sup>1</sup> so his conception of inspired Scripture was also more comprehensive. In Syria, we find about the close of the second century a Gospel in circulation bearing the name of Peter, the same which has recently been discovered by Dr Rendel Harris, and is now known to be a distinctly Docetic production. But this Gospel, which Serapion, the Bishop of Rhossus, is willing to have read in his diocese, is not proved to have enjoyed general acceptance and use in the Church, but only to have been allowed for private and individual perusal. There is no reason to doubt that the Gospel quartette set forth by Irenæus was adopted thus early throughout the whole Church.

We conclude in favour of the credibility of Irenæus. We hold that less than a hundred years from the time when eyewitnesses survived of the miraculous works of Jesus of Nazareth, and when companions of the Apostles were living

<sup>1</sup> Schaff, *Ante-Nicene Christianity*, ii. 783.

to tell to the succeeding generation what manner of men they were, we have a reliable witness, with learning, with retentive memory, and with sobriety of judgment as well as acuteness of intellect, vouching for it that Four Gospels, and only Four, were received as sacred authorities in widely separated quarters of the Church, and assigning to the Four the names by which they have all along been known, as if no other had ever belonged to them.

## CHAPTER V.

A GOSPEL COLLECTION—MURATORIAN  
FRAGMENT AND TATIAN.

FROM Irenæus, who is well able to testify to the usage of the Church of Rome in the decade 180-190 A.D., we pass to a document still more directly representing the mind of the Roman Church about the same time. This is THE MURATORIAN FRAGMENT, so called from the Italian scholar Muratori, who extracted it from a manuscript collection of miscellaneous pieces found in the Ambrosian Library in Milan, and published by him in 1740. The manuscript from which this extract is taken had originally belonged to the famous Irish monastery of Bobbio, and had itself been copied in the eighth century. The copy must have been made from what was even then a mutilated exemplar, for it begins in the middle of a sentence, and, as it is also defective at the end, it is properly called a fragment. It is in

Latin, and appears to be a badly done translation of a Greek account of the Canon. "Its evidence," says Dr S. P. Tregelles,<sup>1</sup> one of its most careful editors, "is not the less trustworthy from its being a blundering and illiterate transcript of a rough and rustic translation of a Greek original." It has been attributed to Caius the Presbyter, about 190 A.D., and also to Hippolytus, but the authorship remains uncertain. It professes to have been written by a contemporary of Pius, the tenth Bishop of Rome, for referring to the 'Shepherd of Hermas' the Fragment declares it was written "very recently in our times in the city of Rome by Hermas while his brother Pius sat in the chair of the Church of Rome." The episcopate of Pius is regarded as having lasted from 139 to 154 A.D., but as to this there is divergence of opinion among ecclesiastical historians. There is an undoubted reference to Montanism towards the close of the Fragment, which would put its production nearer the close of the second century, if not with Zahn<sup>2</sup> into the beginning of the third. But the date commonly assigned to it, 170 A.D., is quite consistent with the Fragment itself, and may be accepted approximately as the time which it represents. That it was written in Rome, or in some part of Italy, is established by the internal evidence, and if it were

<sup>1</sup> Canon of Muratori, p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> GK. ii. 136.

original and not a translation from the Greek it would be the earliest ecclesiastical writing we possess in that tongue. As Westcott says,<sup>1</sup> however, “the recurrence of Greek idioms appears conclusive as to the fact that it is a translation, and this agrees well with its Roman origin, for Greek continued to be even at a later period the ordinary language of the Roman Church.”

The testimony of the Fragment to the Four-fold Gospel, bearing in mind its mutilated character, is unmistakable. It begins in the middle of a sentence, and its opening words are: “But at some he was present and so he set them down” (“aliquibus tamen interfuit et ita posuit”). As the next sentence refers to “the third Book of the Gospel, the Gospel according to Luke,” and as the writer goes on to give an account entirely his own of the composition of St John’s Gospel, we are led to conclude that the opening words are part of his account of the second Gospel, the Gospel according to St Mark. It is true we cannot assume as certain a codex containing the Gospels in the order to which we have become accustomed. At the same time, out of all the arrangements of the order of the Four Gospels which have been found, the order Mark, Matthew, Luke, John, is without example. It is a fair inference that we should regard the refer-

<sup>1</sup> Canon, p. 216.

ence of the writer in the opening words as being to the Gospel according to St Mark. On this assumption a difficulty arises as to what is meant by the expression, "at some he was present." It might refer to incidents or discourses in the life of Jesus at which the writer of the Gospel was present, and which he set down of his own knowledge. This, however, could not be said of St Mark. It is doubtful whether he was ever in our Lord's company at all, although he has been with some reason identified as the young man without a name whom he introduces into the narrative of the Lord's betrayal (Mark xiv. 51, 52). How, then, are the words to be explained consistently with this fact? St Mark has always been regarded as St Peter's interpreter,—as having received the materials of his Gospel from St Peter,—and it is to this source that we attribute the numerous autoptic touches with which his Gospel abounds. Moreover, it was the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark, which was the favourite resort of the disciples of Jesus after the Ascension, where discourse would often turn, in the hearing of St Mark, on the mighty works and the wonderful words of Jesus. Bearing this in mind, it seems quite permissible, as Westcott holds,<sup>1</sup> to regard the expression as referring to con-

<sup>1</sup> Canon, p. 543 n. Cf. Zahn, Einleitung, ii. 428, 429.

versations with St Peter at which St Mark and others were present, in which the chief Apostle of the Lord gave reminiscences of His divine life and ministry and death and resurrection. This explanation appears to be entirely satisfactory, and we need have little hesitation in regarding the opening words as a testimony to the second Gospel.

That the list of books of New Testament Scripture in the original of our mutilated extract began with St Matthew is the irresistible inference. What the Fragment has to say of "the third" and "the fourth" Gospel makes us regret that we are not in possession of the whole. "The third Book of the Gospel," it goes on to say, "that according to Luke, was compiled in his own name by Luke, the physician you know of (iste), from what he heard from others when, after Christ's Ascension, Paul had taken him to be with him as a companion in travel. Yet neither did he see the Lord in the flesh; and he, too, as he was able to ascertain events, so set them down, beginning with the birth of John (the Baptist). The fourth of the Gospels was written by John, one of the disciples. When exhorted by his fellow-disciples and bishops, he said, Fast with me this day for three days; and what may be revealed to any of us let us relate it to one another. The same

night it was revealed to Andrew, one of the Apostles, that John was to write all things in his own name, and they were all to certify it. And, therefore, though various elements are taught in the several books of the Gospels, yet it makes no difference to the faith of believers, since by one guiding Spirit all things are declared in all of them concerning the Nativity, the Passion, the Resurrection, the conversations with His disciples, and His two comings—the first in lowliness and contempt, which has come to pass, the second, glorious with royal power, which is to come. What marvel, therefore, if John so firmly sets forth each statement in his Epistles too, saying of himself, What we have seen with our eyes, and heard with our ears, and our hands have handled, these things we have written unto you? For so he declares himself not only an eyewitness and a hearer, but also a recorder of all the marvels of the Lord in order."

There are several points of interest in this statement.

(1) The author of the fourth Gospel is here said to be one of "the disciples" of the Lord. This does not distinguish him from "the Apostle," but rather describes John in his quality as an eyewitness and competent narrator of the work and teaching of his Master. The Fragmentist is not

so much concerned about the apostolicity of the Gospels as about their trustworthiness as a record of Christ and His redemption. Irenæus, as we shall see, who had no doubt of the identity of John with the Apostle, also calls him the “disciple of the Lord.”

(2) The compiler of this list of the books of New Testament Scripture knows of Four Gospels, and only Four. Mention is made of the Shepherd, and also of an Apocalypse of Peter, as books to be used at least for edification. But no Gospel is mentioned as in any way coming into competition with the Gospels which are named, and which are the Four Gospels of the Catholic Church to-day.

(3) These Gospels have attributed to them the inspiration of the Divine Spirit, which breathes through each, and binds them all together as one whole.

(4) In their totality, as Zahn points out,<sup>1</sup> the Four Gospels contain all that is requisite, so that as one whole they set forth the Nativity, the Passion, the Resurrection, and the Second Coming, even though the second and the fourth Gospels contain no account of the Birth of Jesus. It is a significant tribute to the growth of the combined authority of the Gospel quartette that already, at this early date, and at all events within

<sup>1</sup> GK. ii. 41.

the second century, the essential harmony of the Gospels was discerned and practically applied.

Despite the uncertainty as to the precise date of this valuable relic of early Christian antiquity, we may regard it as directly representing the mind of the Church of Rome, and showing the Gospel Collection of Four established even before the time of Irenæus.

It is a far cry from the Church of Rome to the Church of Syria, with its two great centres at Antioch and Edessa, but here also we have testimony to the existence and authority of a Fourfold Gospel as explicit and weighty as that which has just been considered. Whilst we have in the Syriac version a witness for the Syrian Church from a very early date, we have in TATIAN an individual testimony of no ordinary value. It was not at Antioch but at Edessa that the Syriac Scriptures were chiefly in circulation. Antioch, the capital of the great Empire of Seleucus, was a Greek city, and the Gospel did not require to change its Greek dress in the city where the disciples of Jesus were first called Christians. It was different with Edessa, the flourishing capital of the Syrian principality of Osrhoene, which preserved its independence of Rome well into the third century of our era. Here, on the boundary-line between Greek and Persian civil-

isation, still flourished a large amount of Semitic culture unaffected by Hellenic cosmopolitanism. When Christianity set foot on this soil it could not help assuming a national form, and the necessity arose early of possessing the written Gospel in the vernacular. Singularly enough, it is the Fourfold Gospel rather than individual Gospels which arrests attention here, in the *Diatessaron* of Tatian.

The personality of Tatian is not very clearly revealed, but there are some points of interest regarding him. Born, probably of Greek parents, in Assyria, as he tells us in his ‘Address to the Greeks,’ he travelled much in pursuit of rhetoric and philosophy. He found his way to Rome, as did most of those in that time who had any special need to be supplied, or any special remedy for human ills to make known, or any special discovery in truth to publish abroad. In Rome he came under the influence of Justin Martyr. Under the teaching of Justin he embraced Christianity somewhere about 150 A.D., when he was already in middle life. The particulars of his career after his conversion are not clear, but he seems to have left for the East and devoted himself to the defence of Christianity, of which he became one of the most strenuous and able apologists. In opposition to Zahn, who considers that he was but once in Rome, and that he

became a Christian in the East, and ended his life there, Harnack maintains that he made a second visit to Rome, became eminent as a teacher in the Church, but after the death of Justin fell into heresy of an ascetic and Encratite tendency, and broke with the Church in 172 A.D., returning finally to his native land and there spending the remainder of his days. The peculiarity of some of Tatian's views caused him to appear to Irenæus a specially obstinate heretic, but he seems never to have separated himself from the Catholic Church nor to have founded a sect or party. He was still honourably named in Rome at the beginning of the third century as a champion of the orthodox doctrine of the divinity of Christ. Clement and Origen controverted his views, but did not refer to him as the leader of a party. His apologetic treatise continued to be held in honour in the Greek Church after he had passed away. In it, and in what remains of his other writings composed in Greek, he is entitled to bear witness to the condition of the Church Catholic in the period 150-170 A.D. and onwards.

Eusebius tells us that he left a great many writings,<sup>1</sup> but the only two he names are 'The Address to the Greeks' and that "combination and collection of the Gospels, I know not how, to which he gave the title *Diatessaron*." It is this

<sup>1</sup> H. E., IV. 29.

work—εὐαγγέλιον Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τὸ διὰ τεσσάρων—which gives him the place he occupies in the history of the canon. Eusebius is the first Christian writer to notice the Diatessaron, but the vagueness of his description shows that he had never seen it, and that he only knew it by hearsay. Epiphanius seems to have had still less acquaintance with it, for, referring to Tatian, he remarks: “People say that the Diatessaron Gospel, which some call the Gospel of the Hebrews, originates with him.” It is still more noteworthy that Jerome is wholly silent regarding it, mentioning from among “the endless volumes” of Tatian only the one “Contra gentes florentissimus liber.” This goes somewhat against the contention of those who, like Harnack, believe that the Diatessaron was compiled from the Greek and afterwards translated into Syriac; for if there had been a Greek Diatessaron in circulation some of those writers would have been likely to know it. Professor Gregory<sup>1</sup> has little doubt that the Harmony was originally Greek. The Arabic translation of the Diatessaron calls the Harmony the work of Tatian “the Greek.” But he holds it to be an altogether possible thing that it should at an early date have been translated into Syriac. That it was composed in Syriac at a very early period, and obtained a sure place

<sup>1</sup> Canon and Text, p. 399.

in the affections of Syrian Christians as a compendium of the life and teaching of Christ, accounts sufficiently for the ignorance of early historiographers, and also for its long-continued use in the Syrian Church.

Its existence is well attested in the Church of Syria. The so-called 'Doctrine of Addai,' whether we assign it with Zahn to the second half of the third century or with Harnack to about 400 A.D., testifies that at Edessa the *Diatessaron* was used in public worship in place of the individual Gospels, and passed for Holy Scripture. Aphraates, about the middle of the fourth century, in his Homilies, treats the *Diatessaron* as Holy Scripture. Ephræm, who died in 373 A.D., knew the individual Gospels, but used the *Diatessaron* exclusively as Holy Scripture. It was the Commentary of Ephræm upon the *Diates-*  
*saron*, preserved in an Armenian translation, and translated from Armenian into Latin by Mechitarist Fathers in Venice, which gave to modern scholarship the first really accurate and reliable account of the contents of this work. It was then seen to follow the narratives of our Four Gospels, according to a plan conceived by Tatian, and to contain nothing, speaking broadly, that is not to be found in them. It is from Theodoret of Cyrrhus that we have the most explicit account which Christian antiquity supplies of this remark-

able treatise. Writing in 453 A.D., he says<sup>1</sup> at the end of his chapter on Tatian, “ He also composed the Gospel which goes by the name of Diatessaron, having cut out the genealogies and all that shows our Lord to have been of the seed of David according to the flesh. And it was in use not only by those who were of that way of thinking, but also by those who follow the Apostolic doctrines, not being aware of the wickedness of the compilation, but using it in more simple fashion as a convenient epitome. I found more than two hundred such books held in honour in our Churches, and I collected them and put them out of the way, and substituted for them the Gospels of the four Evangelists ” (*τὰ τῶν τεττάρων εὐαγγελιστῶν ἀντεισήγαγον εὐαγγέλια*). By this time the individual Gospels had gained the upper hand, and the Diatessaron disappeared from the public services of the national Syrian Church ; but it continued to be used by scholars for purposes of study, and from a manuscript, copied as late as the ninth century, an Arabic translation of the Diatessaron was executed in the eleventh century. Of this an example has been found and published, with a Latin translation, by the Italian scholar Ciasca. The career of the Diatessaron was not at an end when it disappeared from the Churches of Syria. As it was the instrument in

<sup>1</sup> In his *'Επιτομὴ αἱρετικῆς κακομυθίας*, i. 20.

the hands of Syrian missionaries from the second century for the evangelisation of dwellers on the banks of the Euphrates, so, centuries later, it became the instrument, in a Latin translation, of the evangelisation of the dwellers in Central Europe and on the banks of the Rhine. The manuscript known as ‘*Codex Fuldensis*,’ which Victor of Capua, about 546 A.D., put in circulation, and which was the Gospel-book employed by Boniface, the Apostle of the Germans, is found to have the Gospels arranged continuously, in the same order as the *Diatessaron*. Thus, far from the scenes of its origin and earliest use, and after it had disappeared in the original Syriac altogether, for no manuscript of the original is known to survive, the work of the Assyrian orator and scribe exercised an influence which was continued in such works as the *Heliand* at a still later time. The work has been translated in the Supplementary Volume of *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, and its contents can be examined in Hemphill’s ‘*Diatessaron*’ and in Mr Hamlyn Hill’s ‘Earliest Life of Our Lord,’ where an English translation is also given. Zahn has also published an elaborate attempt to reconstruct it from the Commentary of Ephræm and the Homilies of Aphraates, which it is interesting to compare with the contents of Ciasca’s Arabic-Latin version.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Forschungen*, i. 112 ff. ; cf. *GK*. ii. 530 ff.

We now know enough of the Diatessaron to be certain that it is not a distinct evangelical narrative, nor yet identical with the Gospel according to the Hebrews, as Epiphanius supposed it to be. The author of ‘Supernatural Religion’ is one of the very few critics who uphold the former view. It has been carefully dissected and analysed, and no doubt can remain in any unprejudiced mind that we have before us the work of which Theodoret withdrew two hundred copies from his diocese,—a work manifestly compiled from our four canonical Gospels, and consisting almost wholly of familiar evangelical materials. It begins with St John’s prologue: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” The genealogies are omitted, but it gives the story of the birth of the Fore-runner as in St Luke, and of the birth of Jesus as in St Matthew and St Luke. His early ministry and His work in Galilee follow, and the later ministry, with parables and discourses, also finds a place. The record as given in the Diatessaron closes with the Lord’s Supper, Gethsemane, the trials before the high priest and Pilate, the crucifixion, and the resurrection and ascension. There are considerable displacements of the Gospel narratives, such as a harmoniser could not help making; but scholars are of opinion that all through his work he was preparing rather a

companion to the Four Gospels than a substitute for them. There is an absence of extra-canonical matter which shows that he had written sources before him, and was not trusting to oral tradition. That the Four Gospels were in existence in the time of Tatian is an obvious corollary from what has been said; that they contained materials which were indispensable to the personal edification of Syrian Christians and to the evangelising of regions beyond, and so were regarded as part of an authoritative revelation, has now been put beyond question.

Tatian is credited with the framing of the first Gospel harmony, just as Basilides with the first quotation of the Gospels as Scripture, Heracleon with the first commentary, and Marcion with the first canon of New Testament Scripture. It is, however, scarcely probable that heretics were so far in advance of orthodox Christians in the consciousness and discernment of the separateness of these Scriptures from all other literature. There are traces of harmonising before the time of Tatian, and it is possible that he only extended somewhat the conception underlying the *'Απομνημονεύματα* of his master, Justin. "There is a tendency," says Dr Sanday,<sup>1</sup> "apparent throughout the later writers,—marked in Clement, very marked in the Didache, and marked also, as we

<sup>1</sup> Inspiration, pp. 301, 302.

overstep the limits of their period, in Justin,—to combine together phrases from these two Gospels, St Matthew and St Luke. So much is this the case that the hypothesis has more than once been thrown out that the writers in question, more particularly Justin, quoted, at least at times, not from our separate Gospel, but from a Harmony of the Gospels. That was not published till after Justin's death; but it would not be improbable that some sort of rough draft might have been used by both master and scholar before its publication. . . . Besides Tatian's Harmony, there was another, as we know, composed very soon after his by Theophilus of Antioch. This would show that the idea of harmonising or combining Gospels was in the air.” If we hold that the Diatessaron was first compiled in Greek, we may see in that fact an evidence of the previous existence of a Harmony of the Four Gospels, such as the *'Απομνημονεύματα* may have been.

## CHAPTER VI.

A GOSPEL COLLECTION—JUSTIN MARTYR.

WE proceed higher up the stream to the valuable testimony of JUSTIN MARTYR. It is likely that he was born about 100 A.D.<sup>1</sup> He was a native of Palestine, having been born in Flavia Neapolis in Samaria. After a long and disappointing quest for satisfaction and rest in philosophical systems, he found what he sought in Christ and His Gospel. He set himself forthwith to propagate and defend the faith which he had thus received, and he stands out as one of the greatest of the Christian apologists. In this interest he laboured at Ephesus and Rome, where

<sup>1</sup> The chronology of Justin is by no means certain, the data for determining it being scanty and ambiguous. Dr Hort placed his martyrdom in 148 A.D.; the *First Apology* in 146; the *Second* (if really separate from the first) in 146 or 147; and the *Dialogue* about the same time. Harnack (*Chronologie*, p. 284) gives the chronology as follows,—Conversion, 133; stay in Ephesus, about 135; *Apology* (he regards the two as one), a year or two after 150; the *Dialogue*, between 155 and 160; martyrdom at Rome, between 163 and 167, perhaps 165 A.D.

he resided for some years. Out of many writings which have come down to us under his name, three only survive which can be regarded as genuine products of his pen—the two Apologies and the Dialogue with Trypho the Jew. The First Apology, in all probability written soon after 150 A.D., is addressed to the Emperor Antoninus Pius; the Second, written not much later, appeals rather to the Senate, and incidentally to the Emperor. In these Apologies he challenges the attention of Roman Emperor, Senate, and people, not simply to the facts relating to Christianity and its Divine Founder, but also to the records in which they are contained. The Dialogue with Trypho the Jew is a more elaborate treatise, modelled on the Dialogues of Plato, and deals not only with the facts relating to Christianity and its Divine Founder, but also with the leading doctrines of the Christian faith. He quotes the Gospel as something known to his opponent, and cites the Memoirs as his authorities for speaking of Jesus as the Logos to this Jewish controversialist. Issuing as they do from the middle of the second century, his works are among the most precious monuments of sub-apostolic times, and afford much insight into early Christian life, instruction, and worship.

It was long held, and thought to be fully established by modern critical discussions, that

Justin, while probably knowing our Gospels, or at least some of them, seldom made use of them, but had another Gospel narrative, to which the references in the Apologies and the Dialogue were to be assigned. This view found its most reasonable and learned exponent in the great German scholar, Karl A. Credner, whose 'History of the New Testament Canon' for long exercised a powerful influence in this department of Biblical learning. When the question was asked what this Gospel work possessed by Justin was, the answer was at first, "the Gospel according to the Hebrews," and later, a peculiar form of this apocryphal work, appearing as the Gospel of Peter, or even as the Diatessaron of Tatian. Although the Gospel according to the Hebrews has not yet been recovered, the Gospel of Peter and the Diatessaron can now be examined, and their testimony does not support the theory of Credner. The question of Justin's employment of an extra-canonical document is not yet finally answered, but the present state of knowledge on the subject will be considered later in this chapter.

That Justin uses the three Synoptic Gospels is generally agreed among scholars. He never mentions the Evangelists by name, but for his purpose, whether in addressing the Roman Emperor in vindication of the character and good

name of the Christians, or in proving the transitoriness of the law by its fulfilment in Christ to Trypho the Jew, the names of the Evangelists were altogether without weight, and he did well not to encumber his arguments with them. No more does he mention the name of St Paul, to whose epistles there are undoubted references. The only New Testament book whose author he names is the Apocalypse, which he attributes to St John, but does not quote, although it contains the very title, “the Word of God,” which is the foundation of Justin’s doctrine of the Person of Christ (*καλεῖται τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ*, Rev. xix. 13). But though Justin never names the Synoptists, it is not difficult to distinguish in his quotations references to all three. The general name by which he designates and quotes the Gospel records is the well-known name by which Xenophon describes his Memoirs of his master Socrates—*Ἀπομνημονεύματα*. The Memorabilia<sup>1</sup> are the records contained for us in the Gospels concerning Christ, written for us by His disciples. Behind the general designation we can distinguish the individual Gospels. The reference to the bloody sweat decisively intimates the use of

<sup>1</sup> Sanday remarks that the Memorabilia are historical authorities of weight, as coming from Apostles, but no more. They are not called “Gospels,” but just “Memoirs,” because he is not writing to Christians but to heathen.—‘Inspiration,’ p. 305.

St Luke, who alone records it; the reference to the sons of Zebedee, under the name of Boanerges, in the same way intimates the use of St Mark. Of St Matthew there are many clear indications,<sup>1</sup> even if in not a few of the quotations from his Gospel there are words also taken from St Luke—a combination which points to early harmonising. The expression used in the reference which obscurely hints at the second Evangelist (*ἐν τοῖς ἀπομνημονεύμασιν αὐτοῦ*, that is *Πέτρου*, where the meaning is “in the recollections which have come down in the Church from St Peter”) only goes to confirm the tradition that St Mark’s Gospel is founded upon St Peter’s preaching. The assumption that the reference is to the second Gospel is supported by what Justin says of the Memoirs as written by apostles and their companions—“In the Memoirs, which I take to have been composed by His Apostles and those who followed them, it stands written.”<sup>2</sup> This description is precisely in accord with the commonly received view that St Matthew and St John, themselves Apostles, wrote our first and fourth Gospels, and St Mark and St Luke, followers of Apostles, the second and third. It is notable that when Justin<sup>3</sup> is quoting from St Luke, he avoids using the word “Apostles,” and

<sup>1</sup> See Dial., c. 78, for references to St Matthew.

<sup>2</sup> Dial., c. 103.

<sup>3</sup> Apol., i. 35. Dial., c. 105.

in two places employs the more general expression, “they that have recorded the Memoirs” (*οἱ ἀπομνημονεύσαντες*).

This brings us to the question which has been frequently discussed, whether the fourth Gospel is to be included among the Memoirs. There is, indeed, the prior question whether Justin made use of the fourth Gospel at all. When we examine Justin’s doctrine of the Person of Christ, we cannot help feeling that there is a close relationship between his Logos and that of the fourth Gospel. Semisch<sup>1</sup> shows by a careful analysis that it is neither to Plato nor to the Neo-Platonists that Justin owes his conception of the Logos; and while he admits that the Alexandrian and Philonic theosophy had a share in Justin’s formulation of it, he claims that its substance rests on a purely Scriptural and Christian foundation. It is scarcely possible to doubt that there is some relationship between the Logos of Justin and that of the fourth Gospel. Either the fourth Gospel is dependent upon Justin, or Justin upon the fourth Gospel. It does not take long to discover that of the two, originality belongs to the Gospel, and that Justin’s doctrine is a development along the same line of thought. Supposing, however, that Justin had adapted the Logos

<sup>1</sup> *Justin Martyr*, ii. 193 ff.

doctrine of Philo to the setting forth of the Person of Christ, there are still a considerable number of incidental references and allusions which point to Justin's use of the fourth Gospel. He speaks of Christ as the Word and Son of the Father, "Who was made Flesh."<sup>1</sup> Again he refers to St John when he says: "Except ye be born again, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. That it is impossible for those who have once been born to enter into the wombs of those that bore them is evident"<sup>2</sup> (John iii. 3-5). In the Dialogue,<sup>3</sup> after quoting Ps. xxii. 20 f., in which "My only begotten" ( $\tauὸν μονογενῆ μον$ ) occurs, he proceeds: "For that He was only begotten to the Father of all things, peculiarly born of Him, His word and power, and that He afterwards became man through the virgin, as we learned from the Memoirs, I have before shown" (John i. 18). Altogether there are about twenty obvious references, and half as many more echoes of St John in the Apologies and the Dialogue.

It is thus in a high degree probable that Justin knew and used the fourth Gospel. But how does the admission bear upon a Gospel collection? Professor Harnack's view may be referred to.<sup>4</sup> That Justin knew the fourth Gospel he

<sup>1</sup> *Apol.*, i. 32.

<sup>2</sup> *Apol.*, i. 61.

<sup>3</sup> *Dial.*, c. 105.

<sup>4</sup> *Chronologie*, pp. 673-5.

holds to be overwhelmingly probable. That he classed it with the Memoirs and regarded it as the work of the Apostle John, he says, cannot be proved. He will not deny that Justin held the fourth Gospel to be the work of John the Apostle, and his judgment as to the authorship of the Apocalypse appears to him to weigh in favour of the Gospel also. “We must accordingly leave the possibility, ay, the probability, open that the description of the fourth Gospel as the work of one of the Twelve is found about 155-160, and that in Justin.” Recent criticism,<sup>1</sup> in spite of Harnack’s doubt, is favourable to an affirmative answer. As we have already seen, Justin speaks of the Gospels as “composed by Apostles of the Lord and their followers”—a form of expression which accurately describes the Gospels as we have received them, two written by Apostles, St Matthew and St John, and two by apostolic followers, St Mark and St Luke. It seems, further, to be quite possible, and of some degree of probability, that Justin, and his antagonist Trypho as well, knew not merely separate Gospels, but a Gospel collection. “In your *so-called Gospel*,” says Trypho,<sup>2</sup> “I am

<sup>1</sup> Leipoldt, *Geschichte des neutestamentlichen Kanons*, p. 130, n. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Dial., c. 10.

aware that there are commandments so wonderful and great that nobody can be supposed able to keep them." "*In the Gospel* He is recorded to have said: All things have been delivered unto Me by My Father; and no man knoweth the Father save the Son, nor the Son save the Father, and they to whomsoever the Son may reveal Him" (Matth. xi. 27).<sup>1</sup> "The Gospel" here spoken of as a unit is evidently the same as "The Memoirs," and the identification lends probability to the view that Justin had some collection, which may have been the original of Tatian's *Diatessaron*. There is, in fact, a historical presumption of some weight furnished by the *Diatessaron* of Justin's pupil, that Justin was possessed of a collection, or a harmony of some sort himself. As has been noted already, Justin does a considerable amount of harmonising in his quotations. He weaves together passages, especially from the parallel narratives of St Matthew and St Luke, in a way which has suggested an exercise of memory, but which may be better explained by the existence of some kind of harmony, if only of the Synoptic Gospels. If the Memoirs were a kind of harmony like the *Diatessaron*, and its original or pattern, we should have an explanation of the absence of

<sup>1</sup> Dial., c. 100.

express references to the Evangelists. It has been observed that Justin has nearly two hundred references to Old Testament books, and quotes them by name, whereas he never once names the writer of a Gospel. If he were simply quoting “the Gospel” or ‘Memoirs’ which had taken the form of a harmony, his quotations could not well be assigned to the individual writers, merged as they were in this combined whole.

Justin’s allusions to facts, and even sayings, not found in our canonical Gospels are interesting.<sup>1</sup> He speaks of Jesus as born in a cave, of the wise men as coming from Arabia, of Jesus as making yokes and ploughs in the carpenter’s workshop. He alludes to the circumstance that “when Jesus came to the river Jordan where John was baptizing, as Jesus went down into the water also fire was kindled in the Jordan”—a circumstance which, singularly enough, is found in certain manuscripts of the Old Latin in this form: “And when Jesus was baptized a great light shone around from the water, in so much that all feared who had come near.” It is to be noticed here, however, that Justin is careful not to give apostolic authority for “the fire kindled in the Jordan,” for he follows this statement on his own authority

<sup>1</sup> See Zahn, GK. i. 537 ff.

with the further statement that “the Apostles of our Christ Himself recorded that when He came up out of the water the Holy Spirit as a Dove lighted upon Him,” where the Apostles are St Matthew and St John in whose Gospels it is. Justin is equally careful not to ascribe the heavenly words at Christ’s baptism in the apocryphal form : “Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee,” to the Memoirs, but he adds that the Memoirs of the Apostles tell how the devil came to Him and tempted Him.<sup>1</sup>

There are two sayings of our Lord recorded by Justin which are not found in the Gospels : “For this reason also our Lord Jesus Christ said, In whatsoever things I find you, in these also shall I judge you”;<sup>2</sup> “Christ said there shall be schisms and heresies.”<sup>3</sup> These references are a very slender foundation upon which to build up any theory of a rival Gospel having been used by Justin. That the Gospel according to the Hebrews may have been the source of these and other features in the numerous references of Justin is quite possible, but they may also have come to Justin by oral transmission.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Dial., 88.

<sup>2</sup> Dial., 47.

<sup>3</sup> Dial., 35.

<sup>4</sup> With regard to the *Ἀκτα Πιλάτου* quoted by Justin (*Apol.*, i. 35), Professor Stanton has made it probable that this is not a mere rhetorical expression such as we find in some of the Fathers appealing to authority, but a Pilate-record which may well have been

Upon a review of the evidence afforded by the references we may confidently hold that the Memoirs of Justin were a Gospel collection such as was undoubtedly known later to the Muratorian Fragmentist, to Tatian, and to Irenæus. That they included St John's Gospel is highly probable. That they included any other Gospel than our Four is very improbable, for any such Gospel would have been read along with the others in the services of the early Christians, and must have become well known. No such Gospel, however, is known either to the Muratorian Fragmentist or to Irenæus, and we may believe there was no such Gospel. We are thus entitled to trace back the collection of Four Gospels to the middle of the second century, which marks the period of Justin's literary activity. Professor Charteris has well shown the absurdity of the contention that these Memoirs were not the Gospels of our Canon. "The position, then, is," he says,<sup>1</sup> "that Justin used and Trypho read a Gospel which cannot be traced elsewhere or afterwards,— a Gospel

before Justin, Tertullian, and the writer of the Gospel of Peter, as well as the writer of the Letter professing to be from Pilate to Claudius, contained in the 'Acts of Peter and Paul' and the 'Acta Pilati.' The parallelisms taken singly are of insignificant account, but taken together they form an argument of considerable strength.  
—Gospels as Historical Documents, pp. 104-133.

<sup>1</sup> Canonicity, p. lxiii.

different from that which his contemporary Marcion knew and mutilated: a set of books which so marvellously disappeared that Irenæus (who had possibly known Justin, and certainly wrote within thirty years of his death), when he descended on the four winds, the four quarters of the world, and the four Gospels, knew nothing of them; and that Justin, when he quoted the apocryphal book or books, quoted so strangely that Eusebius, with all his love of gossip and all his historical lore, and many another besides him, never knew that the quotations were not from Matthew, Mark, Luke, John. That is to say, that the Memoirs to which Justin challenged the attention of the Roman emperor, senate, and people, and which were, therefore, well known, had so completely perished from the earth that Irenæus, who was familiar with the affairs of Asia, Rome, and Gaul, appealed to friend and foe to remark how marvellous is God's great providence in giving to Christendom and to humanity the Four Gospels—the Four, neither more nor less—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John."

That these Gospels by Justin's day were already marked out as of special authority and sacredness needs hardly to be said. They were esteemed as records of the Life of Jesus, and were accounted the more worthy because they came from Apostles and

apostolic men. They were publicly read at the Christian assemblies for worship on “the day of the sun,” and read alternately with the Prophets, as long as time permitted. And more remarkable still—Justin himself quotes them as he quotes the books of the Old Testament, which was the whole Bible of the primitive Church. In the Apologies and in the Dialogue we find copious quotations from the Old Testament, from the book of Genesis, from the Psalms, and from the Prophets—Isaiah being by far the most frequently quoted. In his Old Testament quotations he names the books and quotes with general exactitude, because he has the Old Testament Scriptures before him in the Septuagint translation.<sup>1</sup> If he quotes the New Testament with greater freedom, it is because he seems to quote from memory; and if he never names his authorities, it is because their names are of no consequence in his contentions. But that he quotes the Gospels as he quotes the Prophets shows that already in his judgment they are of the same authority, and though he never calls them New Testament Scripture, he attributes to them the qualities of

<sup>1</sup> Even in connection with the Old Testament he makes awkward mistakes. He miscalls the Prophets, puts Zephaniah for Zechariah, Jeremiah for Daniel, Isaiah for Jeremiah, Hosea for Zechariah, and Zechariah for Malachi, and he dovetails verses from different parts of Scripture.—Gildersleeve, ‘Justin Martyr,’ p. xxxiv.

Scripture by placing them on the level of the Old Testament books.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> There is good reason to believe that Marcion, while making choice of St Luke as his Gospel, with excisions to suit his views, was acquainted with all Four Canonical Gospels. As the conclusion of a very thorough examination of Marcion's New Testament, Professor Zahn (GK. i. 680) affirms that the heretic found in the Church in his day the same Gospels as Justin tells us were used in the services of the Lord's day, and as Tatian, two decades later, worked into his *Diatessaron*.

## CHAPTER VII.

## THE SHEPHERD OF HERMAS—THE NUMBER FOUR.

FROM Irenæus we travel back thirty years to come to Justin Martyr, and from Justin another thirty to the Shepherd of Hermas and the testimony borne to a Gospel collection in that remarkable writing. There is some difficulty in fixing the exact date of this apocalyptic work, the 'Pilgrim's Progress' of the early Church, greatly esteemed and highly popular. The great Fathers of the third century, like Origen and others, considered Hermas to be the person of that name saluted by St Paul in the Epistle to the Romans. Zahn holds that it is another Hermas who is the subject of the visions, though he gives the book an early date, about 97-100 A.D. But a date somewhat later, between 110 and 125 A.D., has commended itself to other scholars.<sup>1</sup> The Shepherd is pecu-

<sup>1</sup> See Stanton, 'The Gospels as Historical Documents,' p. 41 and n. Cf. p. 81.

liar, even among the apostolic Fathers, in this that it cites no book either of the Old or New Testament by name, although it makes allusion to an apocryphal book (now lost) called ‘Eldad and Modat.’ It does not contain a quotation from any apocryphal gospel. Its whole teaching is in perfect accord with the New Testament Scriptures. It had the widest circulation of any extra-canonical book, and seems to have been regarded as in some sense Holy Scripture down to the first decades of the third century in Rome and in Carthage, in Catholic and Montanist circles alike. When the Sinaitic Manuscript was discovered by Tischendorf a large portion of the Shepherd was found incorporated, showing the high esteem in which it was held when that manuscript was written. There are coincidences to be found in the Shepherd with the language and teaching of St Matthew, St Mark, St Luke, St John, the Acts, 1 Corinthians, Ephesians, Hebrews, 1 Peter, and the Apocalypse. There are, besides, resemblances of expression, and even of sentiment, to St James’s Epistles.

It has fallen, however, to Dr Charles Taylor,<sup>1</sup> Master of St John’s College, Cambridge,—a mathematical scholar who, like the late Rev. Dr Salmon of Dublin, betook himself in later

<sup>1</sup> See his ‘Witness of Hermas to the Four Gospels.’

life to critical and patristic studies,—to discover through its somewhat obscure allusions the suggestion which lies at the foundation of Irenæus's description of the Fourfold Gospel. That Irenæus knew the Shepherd is certain. He quotes it, and goes the length of calling it Scripture. Eusebius, who had diligently perused the works of Irenæus, takes special note of his quotation from the Shepherd. The passages of Hermas, in which Irenæus may have found the suggestion of Four and only Four Gospels, are as follows: “That thou seest a woman sitting upon a bench, strong is the assertion: for the bench hath four feet, and stands firm: for the world is compacted of four elements” (*Vis.* iii. 13. 3); “Therefore there were four rows in the foundation of the tower. . . . The first stones, he says, the ten that have been laid for foundations, are the first generation, the twenty-five the first generation of just men; and there are the twenty-five prophets of God and His servants; and there are the forty apostles and teachers of the preaching of the Son of God” (*Sim.*, ix. 4. 3; 15. 4). The woman sitting upon the bench is the Church, and the four feet of the bench are the Four Gospels, upon which the Church is upheld. Again, the tower in the Similitude which stands four-square, and which also adumbrates the Church, suggests the Four Gospels by the four

rows in its foundations. The correspondence between Irenæus and Hermas is remarkable, and is regarded by Dr Charles Taylor as too close to be accidental. While Hermas depicts the Church as seated on a bench, with four feet representing the Four Gospels, Irenæus says that the Son of God sits upon the four cherubim or living creatures, and that these correspond to the Four Gospels. While Hermas argues that the Gospels, the support of the Church's seat, are four in number because the world is compacted of four elements, Irenæus concludes that the Gospel must have had four constituents to correspond with the fabric of the universe, which was understood to be made up of four elements. Origen compares the Four Gospels to the elements of the faith of the Church, of which elements the whole world consists. While the four rows in Hermas stand for cosmic generations, each of which had received a message of good news, corresponding to one of the Four Gospels, Irenæus says that the Logos revealed Himself to all the four generations, and each of them received a covenant, each revelation and covenant corresponding to one of the canonical Gospels. "The Church in Irenæus," says Dr Taylor, "has the Gospel for its one pillar, and the Gospels for its four pillars: analogous to this in Hermas are the figures of the one bench with

four feet, and the one foundation with its four rows or tiers representing the Gospel and the Gospels. . . . I maintain, on the strength of the evidence adduced, that the famous sayings of Irenæus on the actual and necessary fourfoldness of the Gospel were not his own, but a reproduction of what Hermas had written a generation before; that Hermas, in his enigmatic way, represented the Four Gospels as having already obtained a unique and canonical position; and that, in any case, they had obtained this position in the lifetime and to the knowledge of Hermas, who wrote not in any obscure corner of the earth, but in its capital, Rome.”<sup>1</sup>

The argument of Dr C. Taylor, elaborately and carefully worked out, with proofs too numerous to be mentioned here, is not to be set aside by the remark that the Church had not yet definitely selected the Four Canonical Gospels in the time of Hermas. That is just the point to be proved. Such selection can only be attested by individual references like this; and though the allusions of Hermas are of a cryptic character, the well-known passage in Irenæus suggests the key. It cannot be alleged that there is any allusion to any other Gospel than our four. Professor Stanton, who comes on independent grounds to the same general con-

<sup>1</sup> *Witness of Hermas*, pp. 17, 18.

clusion as Dr Taylor, does not consider himself justified in holding that by this time “the Four Gospels were consciously separated off from all other works of the same kind and classed together as of co-ordinate and unique authority,—in other words, that the conception of the ‘four-fold Gospel’ already existed.”<sup>1</sup> The obscure character of the references in Hermas may not allow us to go all the length spoken of by Dr Stanton. But if there be anything in Dr Taylor’s argument at all, we find a collection of Four Gospels with a certain measure of authority half a century earlier than the famous declaration of Irenæus, and several years earlier than the date assigned by Baur and his school for the composition of St John and others of the Four.

What, then, is the ground for FOUR as the number of the Gospels? Four, to be sure, is the number of the world, and Four Gospels would mark the universality to which the message of the Gospel is destined, even as there are four primary elements, four winds, four seasons, four corners of the earth, and four quarters of the heavens. The number four was a sacred number in the old Hebrew literature: Jehovah manifested His glory in the quadrangular plan of both

<sup>1</sup> *Gospels as Historical Documents*, p. 47.

tabernacle and temple, and in the city, which lieth four-square, whose length is as great as its breadth, the New Jerusalem of the Apocalypse.<sup>1</sup> It is not, however, out of regard to the symbolism of numbers that the Church has adopted Four Gospels. There might have been seven, which is the number of perfection, as there are Seven Spirits of God, and Seven Churches represented by seven lamp-stands in the Apocalypse; or five, as there are in man five senses, and in the Law and in the Psalms five books. Symbolism, as we have seen, is with Irenæus an afterthought; it does not determine the Gospel quaternion,  $\tauὸ\ \tauετραεναγγέλιον$ , but is used in accordance with the fashion of the East, and of the time, to illustrate it. There were by the beginning of the second century Four Gospels, which soon approved themselves to the heart and conscience of the Church as trustworthy and reliable records of the Life and Discourses and Death and Resurrection of Jesus. Any tentative records that might have been in circulation (such as those referred to in Luke i. 1) had served their purpose and fallen out of use. There were no others that could be said to approach them in

<sup>1</sup> Harnack likens the Four to a university with its quadrivium, its four faculties, John being the theologian, Luke the physician, Mark the philologist, Matthew the lawyer. In the Muratorian Canon St Luke is designated *Studiosus juris*. ‘Medicine in the Earliest Church History,’ Texte u. Unters, viii. 39.

general acceptance and use in all the widely separated quarters of the Church,—not the Gospel according to the Hebrews, which was apparently a Gospel for Jewish Christians, the Gospel of a sect, and outside of Palestine little known; not the Gospel of the Egyptians, which was clearly ascetic in its character and confined to a small circle of admirers; not the Gospel of Peter, which was docetic in its tendency, and known only in Syria and Egypt. No party ends were served by the Four Gospels as we have them. They were not perhaps at first all regarded with equal favour,—we have seen that St Matthew was most popular from the beginning,—but they were the best known and the most widely circulated. And thus they grew into the canon of Four which we find stereotyped in Irenæus, and exclusively upheld by Tertullian and Origen.

The question has been raised, Why have we in the New Testament four Gospels, and not one only?<sup>1</sup> One would appear to be the most natural and most convenient for the purposes of private and public edification; and the followers of Marcion were content with one, the mutilated Luke of that heretic; the Syrian Christians found Tatian's *Diatessaron* for centuries adequate to their requirements; and other sects had only

<sup>1</sup> Harnack, *Reden u. Aufsätze*, ii. 239 ff.; Leipoldt, *Geschichte des neutestamentlichen Kanons*, p. 142 ff.

one Gospel. Professor Harnack is of opinion that the four would ultimately have been melted down into one had not special circumstances intervened to make the Church cling tenaciously to the Gospels which had found favour, and to use them as an arsenal of weapons to overcome hostile assaults. The main factor in this situation was Gnosticism; and Gnosticism on the one hand, and the practical requirements of the Church on the other, stayed the process of unification and left us with the four. Leipoldt thinks that the process was hindered by the requirements of the struggle of the Church against Marcion, by the early efforts at canonising individual books of New Testament Scripture, and especially by the rivalry which he conceives to have subsisted at a very early stage between the Synoptics and the fourth Gospel. This implies that the Synoptic Gospels had been already brought together and were regarded as an entity by themselves; but there is nothing to show when this had taken place. That the idea of the fourfold Gospel took possession of the Church when she recognised in St John's Gospel that which seemed to make the representation of the Redeemer adequate and complete, is most natural. There is reason to believe that the collection of the Four was first realised and completed in Asia Minor, though it may have happened simultan-

eously under the influence of the same ideas in other provinces. It may well have been borne in upon the heart of the Church in the early years of the second century, when St John's Gospel was yet fresh with the dew of heaven, that now the Christian had in those Four Gospels a complete portrait of the Master and a full-orbed presentation of His teaching. The teachers of the Church may have felt that in those four they had enough, yet none to spare. That they were four, coincided in the spiritual realm with other works of God in the realm of natural and physical things. That they soon came to be all esteemed of equal authority, and all to be sacred Scripture, like the books of the Old Testament, is clear from the witness of the early Fathers. Although St Mark and St Luke were less esteemed in some quarters, yet all four have been preserved, and St Mark has now come to its own. They were Four Gospels, but yet One Gospel: an adequate substitute for the oral teaching of the Apostles, now that those great lights had disappeared from the firmament of the early Church.

## CHAPTER VIII.

ST MATTHEW.—I.

FROM an early period in the second century, therefore, the Four Gospels were regarded as a unity. As early as the middle of the second century they were read in the weekly assemblies of the faithful; and not much later we find them translated into other tongues, so that remote and newly evangelised peoples might learn for themselves the wonderful works of God in human redemption. The tradition connecting them with Apostles and followers of Apostles is already established, and from that time onwards is practically unanimous. The Four Gospels are anonymous books. In St Matthew and St Mark the personality of the author is nowhere betrayed by the use of the first person. In St Matthew's Gospel the Apostle himself is indeed mentioned<sup>1</sup> as called by Jesus, and included among the Twelve,

<sup>1</sup> Matt. ix. 9; x. 3.

but with nothing to identify him as the author. The names of St Mark, St Luke, and St John are not once found in the Gospels bearing their names. From the fourth Gospel it can be gathered that the author was a Jew and an Apostle of the Lord; but it is doubtful whether, from the indications furnished by the Gospel itself, the shrewdest of the early Fathers could have determined that he was the son of Zebedee. From the preface of the third Gospel and the We-sections of the Acts of the Apostles, as well as from the medical phraseology which abounds in both books, a conclusive argument has been built up in favour of the authorship of St Luke, St Paul's companion in travel and beloved physician. But there is absolutely no sign in early Christian antiquity of any attempt thus to read the internal evidence of St Luke's invaluable histories. There was, however, no necessity for such an appeal to internal evidence. Theophilus of Antioch, when he, first of the early Fathers, named St John as the author of the fourth Gospel, only followed the tradition which had come down to him; and Irenæus, when, in his great work 'Against Heresies,' he named St Matthew, St Mark, St Luke, and St John as the authors of the four, did so because those names had come down to his time along with the Gospels. It might, of course, be alleged that

the editor, or, if it should seem more probable, the community, who, early in the second century, brought the Gospels together in a collection, on their own authority ascribed the Four Gospels to Matthew, John, Luke, and Mark respectively. Since, however, the Gospels were written singly and independently, and without reference to any such later collection, and since they were read, copied, and circulated before being gathered into a collection, there would be during the period of their separate circulation no lack of tradition concerning their origin and authorship. Such traditions have been preserved for us in the pages of Eusebius, Irenæus, Papias, and elsewhere. The description in the titles of the Gospels, in the originals and in the earliest versions, assigning the authors at a later time, finds its most natural explanation in the fact that particulars as to authorship contained in the titles accompanied the individual Gospels from the beginning. The most recent discussions of the internal evidence confirm this early tradition in the case of St Luke and St Mark, to the extent of conclusively settling their authorship of the third and second Gospels respectively; and if we cannot, in the present state of our knowledge, claim such a full accord between the external and internal evidence in the case of St Matthew and St John, we shall see that in their

case also the tradition is not contradicted, but to a large extent borne out by a due consideration of the internal indications of authorship contained in these Gospels.

Of the early and wide circulation of St Matthew's Gospel there are abundant proofs. Of all the New Testament books it has the largest attestation in early Christian literature. There are references to it, or coincidences with its language, in practically every one of the early Fathers. There is some reason to believe that it was the first of the New Testament books to be translated into Syriac, and as the Syriac was probably the earliest of the versions, the translation of St Matthew's Gospel would be the first to be executed. It is quite likely that it was early read by the Rabbis, and that this is one explanation of those parallels which have been set up between the teaching of Jesus and the Rabbis, discrediting the originality of Jesus.<sup>1</sup> Not only by Catholic writers, but by heretics, St Matthew seems to have been held in authority and esteem. The Ebionites, before they became schismatical heretics and rejected the Supernatural Birth, seem to have used the Gospel

<sup>1</sup> The saying of "the mote" and "the beam" (Matt. vii. 3-6), which is ascribed to Rabbi Tarphon (100 A.D.), might well have been borrowed from St Matthew. See Erich Bischoff, 'Jesus und die Rabbinen,' pp. 1-8, 89, 90.

according to St Matthew.<sup>1</sup> Ptolemæus, one of the disciples of the gnostic Valentinus, quoted frequently words of our Lord recorded by St Matthew; and the Marcosian sect of heretics, who had a fondness for apocryphal gospels and forged spurious writings of their own, also exhibit references to it.<sup>2</sup> Even the heathen Celsus is a witness to the wide circulation and use of St Matthew's Gospel. While Celsus knew the other Gospels he was most familiar with St Matthew, being acquainted with the incidents recorded in the first two chapters, and many circumstances attending the passion of Jesus,—the putting a reed in His hand, the giving Him gall to drink, the earthquake at the Crucifixion, the rolling away of the stone by an angel.<sup>3</sup> A singular proof of the wide circulation of St Matthew's Gospel is seen in the fact that Pantænus, the head of the Catechetical School of Alexandria, on the occasion of a journey to India,—that is possibly to South Arabia,—found a Gospel under the name of St Matthew written in Hebrew characters circulating among the Christians of this region. “For Bartholomew, one of the Apostles,” says Eusebius,<sup>4</sup> “had

<sup>1</sup> Irenæus, *Adversus Hæreses*, i. 26. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Westcott, *Canon*, p. 313 ff., where examples are given from the pages of Epiphanius and Irenæus.

<sup>3</sup> Patrick, *The Apology of Origen*, p. 91.

<sup>4</sup> *H. E.*, V. 10. 3.

preached to them and left with them the writing of Matthew in the Hebrew language, which they had preserved till that time." This was possibly as early as 180 A.D.

It seems singular that the one Gospel which assuredly grew up on the soil of Palestine should have outdistanced the others so completely in the race for the favour of the Gentile Churches. "But for their admission into the canon," says Professor Harnack,<sup>1</sup> "Mark certainly, and Luke probably, would have disappeared. Wherein lies the lack in Mark and Luke and the sufficiency of Matthew? The Gospel of Matthew is a work vindicating Christianity against Jewish aspersions and objections which were early taken up by Gentile opponents. This Evangelist alone has a distinct interest in our Lord's teaching as such: he instructs, he proves, and all the while he keeps the Church well in the foreground. . . . The Gospel which in point of contents and by its tendencies stands farthest away from Greek ideas, the Gospel which is throughout occupied with sharp and detailed controversy with the unbelieving Jews of Palestine, was early laid hold of in the Greek communities as the Gospel most to their mind, because it met the requirements of defence against the narrower Judaism; in short, on account of its theological and doctrinal char-

<sup>1</sup> Luke the Physician, pp. 167, 168.

acter, and its solemn and ceremonious style." Possibly the very fact that it was the work of an Apostle of the Lord, and the belief, early spread abroad, that it preserved in their most authentic form the words of Jesus, contributed to the popularity of this Gospel. A Gospel, moreover, which had the approval of the Churches where the great events associated with human redemption had transpired, was assured of general acceptance.<sup>1</sup>

No doubt St Matthew, by its very size,—though in this respect it comes short of St Luke,—lends itself to frequent reference and quotation. But, after all, its character and contents were the ground of its early popularity. It presents the Lord to men pre-eminently as the Saviour of the world, the Promised Messiah, the Desire of all nations,—an aspect of Christ always attractive to sin-burdened, sorrow-laden humanity. A Gospel containing the Sermon on the Mount, the Great Invitation, the Missionary Marching Orders of the Church, and many other notable sayings and discourses of Jesus, could not fail to meet with general acceptance, and was certain to be widely circulated and read and quoted. Its parables and miracles, its sayings and doings of Jesus, were early woven into the ever-enlarging Christian literature. Irenæus calls

<sup>1</sup> See Zahn, *Einleitung*, ii. 570, 571 (Eng. trans.)

it St Matthew's, and quotes largely from it by name. We have touching evidence of its preciousness to the Christians of the province over which Irenæus was set as ecclesiastical overseer. One of the most beautiful and heart-stirring relics of Christian antiquity is the Letter of the Churches of Vienne and Lyons, written in 177 A.D., in a time of terrible persecution, to their brethren far away in the Churches of Asia and Phrygia. It is in this Letter that we find the story of the youthful martyr, Blandina, whose loyalty to Christ amid tortures unspeakable remained unshaken till death, and of the aged Pothinus, the predecessor of Irenæus in the see, who suffered martyrdom at the age of ninety. The Letter is saturated with New Testament phraseology. And what connects St Matthew with it is a reference which it contains to the wedding-garment (*ἐνδυμα γάμου*) in the parable of the Marriage of the King's Son, which is spoken of as an object of ambition to those martyrs and a hope to cheer them amid the agonies they were called to endure. It is possible to say that this was an expression which had come down from the lips of the Lord by oral transmission. But it seems rather to be one of those indirect proofs which go to show that St Matthew was read, and pondered, and yielded comfort and strength to persecuted

Christians, in the Valley of the Rhone on the western frontiers of Christendom, in the third quarter of the second century. Such incidental allusions, employed with such effect, are often more convincing than direct citations.

Another such allusion, clearly indicating acquaintance with another discourse of Jesus preserved by St Matthew and by him alone, may be noticed. It is found in Justin's First Apology, where, claiming that the Christians are helpers and allies of all who seek the public good, he declares that one great motive with them is the thought that they are going forward either to everlasting punishment (*αιώνιον κόλασιν*) or to eternal salvation, according to the lives they have lived and the works they have done. The allusion to "everlasting punishment" is made in such a way that we naturally ascribe it to St Matthew's record of our Lord's discourse on the Last Judgment, and it shows how His teaching wrought itself into the lives of His followers as an influence of the greatest moral power. Whilst incidental allusions have great value, there is no lack by the last quarter of the second century of large quotations. Irenæus quotes large passages from St Matthew by name. Athenagoras the Athenian, in the reign of Marcus Aurelius, has quotations of considerable length from the Sermon on the Mount in the Apology

which he presented to the Emperor in vindication of the character of the Christians.

But it is time to set forth in a more connected fashion the chief proofs of the early and wide circulation of St Matthew's Gospel, beginning with JUSTIN MARTYR in the middle of the second century. We have seen that Justin's Memoirs of the Apostles—that is, Memoirs written by Apostles and their followers—included the Four Gospels of the New Testament canon. Whilst making use of all these, and probably of the Gospel of Peter besides, Justin shows a preference for St Matthew and St Luke. In his First Apology, addressed to the Emperor, Justin has quotations from all the Gospels, in the case of St Matthew and St Luke often extending over two or more verses together. From St Matthew there are at least 112 quotations and from St Luke at least 60. Of these two Evangelists, every chapter except one is laid under contribution either in the Apologies or in the Dialogue. In the Dialogue he more than once (c. 23 and c. 100) claims that the Virgin is of the family of David and Jacob and Isaac and Abraham (Matt. i.) We find in Justin a very clear and explicit reference to the Virgin Birth. He takes pains to show that it happened in fulfilment of prophecy, and to explain the sense in which he and the Christians of early days held it to be miraculous.

Referring first to the prophecy of Isaiah, he quotes the prediction, apparently from memory, “Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call His name (*έροντις επὶ τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ Μεθ' ἡμῶν ὁ Θεός*) God with us.” In case the Emperor should think this was just such a thing as was fabled by the poets regarding Jupiter, Justin proceeds to explain.<sup>1</sup> He gives the view of the Virgin Birth held by the Church from the beginning, and tells how the angel “proclaimed to her the glad tidings (*εὐηγγελίσατο αὐτήν*), saying: Behold thou shalt conceive of the Holy Ghost, and thou shalt bear a Son, and He shall be called Son of the Highest, and thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins, as those who recorded (*οἱ ἀπομνημονεύσαντες*) all things concerning our Saviour Jesus Christ taught.” The words of the Evangelist are: “The angel of the Lord appeared [unto Joseph], saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins” (Matt. i. 20, 21). Justin conceives it necessary to explain what St Matthew does not, how the name Jesus is connected with the salvation of His people: “Jesus in Hebrew

<sup>1</sup> Apol. i. 33.

is Saviour (*σωτήρ*).” Justin appeals chiefly to St Matthew, but there is a clause introduced from St Luke, who is his authority for “He shall be called Son of the Highest,” and in the context he refers, though not in exactly quoted words, to the Holy Ghost, who was to come upon the Virgin, and the power of the Highest who was to overshadow her. The birth at Bethlehem—not named, but described as a village thirty-five furlongs from Jerusalem—is also connected by Justin with Micah’s prophecy (v. 2; Matt. ii. 6), and—a point which might weigh with the Emperor—its historical truth is referred by him to the enrolment papers in the time of Cyrenius (*ώς καὶ μαθεῖν δύνασθε ἐκ τῶν ἀπογραφῶν τῶν γενομένων ἐπὶ Κυρηνίου, τοῦ ὑμετέρου ἐν Ἰουδαίᾳ πρώτου γενομένου ἐπιτρόπου*).<sup>1</sup> When we remember that St Matthew writes upon Jewish soil and that his thoughts move within the circle of Jewish ideas, we see how groundless the suggestion is that the Virgin Birth belongs to the region of classical myth and legend. But we see from Justin’s deprecating remark how easily such an explanation of the Virgin Birth could have arisen when the miraculous event was told to the people of classic lands.

Of other incidents recorded in St Matthew Justin has many examples. The Wise Men

<sup>1</sup> *Apol.* i. 34.

from Arabia, who were guided by a star and presented offerings of gold and frankincense and myrrh, and who were warned not to return to Herod—the flight into Egypt—the massacre of the innocents and Rachel weeping for her children,—are all given, even with occasional exaggeration of language, as in the first Gospel. We find also notices of the preaching of the Baptist and latterly of his death, of the Temptation by Satan, following the order of St Matthew, and general references to the miracles of Jesus. Between the commencement of our Lord's ministry and the closing scenes Justin refers to few events. Of the events and details of Passion week Justin has many notices—the triumphal entry, the institution of the Lord's Supper in remembrance of Him, the Agony, the Crucifixion, the parting of the raiment by lot, the mocking of the bystanders, the last Word of resignation, the Burial, the Resurrection on the day of the sun, the appearance to the disciples on the way to Emmaus, and the Ascension. There is a considerable mixture of St Luke and St Matthew, the former here having the preponderance. The Agony is referred to in the Dialogue twice, in one case in terms clearly taken from St Luke (xxii. 44) (c. 103), and in the other in terms strongly suggestive of St Matthew (xxvi. 39) (c. 99): “On the day when He was about to be crucified He took three of His disciples aside

with Him to the mount which is called Olivet, immediately adjacent to the Temple in Jerusalem, and prayed, saying—Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me. And after this He prays, and says: Not as I wish, but as Thou wilt.” The references to the calumny of the Jews as to the alleged theft of the body of Jesus by His disciples and to the Great Commission are from St Matthew alone.

Whilst Justin’s references to incidents of the Gospel narratives are not scanty, his references to the teaching of Jesus and quotations of His words are numerous. St Matthew furnishes a large proportion of these references. There are long quotations from the Sermon on the Mount, and in the *Apology* (cc. xv. xvi.) they are made with a view to show the power of moral transformation that dwelt in the teaching of Christ. The parable of the Sower, the sign of the Prophet Jonah, the charge to the Apostles, and others, are to be referred to St Matthew only. But there are many quotations in which there is a weaving together of both St Matthew and St Luke, as if already there were a Harmony in existence; and there are references where we cannot tell whether it is St Matthew or St Luke that is quoted.

One very remarkable reference on the part of Justin is to those notable words of Jesus: “All things have been delivered unto Me of My Father,

and no man knoweth the Son save the Father and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him" (Matt. xi. 27). Two things are to be noted here. First, this is one of the passages in a Synoptic Gospel which enable us to understand how Jesus could have delivered the discourses we find in St John. In the Dialogue (c. 100) Justin quotes the words in the following terms: "And in the Gospel (that is, the Gospel record) it stands written, All things have been delivered unto Me of My Father, and no man knoweth the Father save the Son; nor yet the Son save the Father and they to whomsoever the Son may reveal Him." These words appear specially to have attracted Justin, whose theological, and especially Christological, views have a distinct affinity with St John. They are quoted also in the First Apology, simply as words of Jesus, twice in the same chapter (Ap. i. 63), though without the lofty claim which introduces them, and in the same order as in the Dialogue, inverting St Matthew's order. Irenæus,<sup>1</sup> it should be said, also quotes the passage in its context, giving the words in Justin's order. Marcion also has the passage, and uses ἔγνω, as Justin does, in preference to γνώσκει or ἐπιγνώσκει. But the quotation is clearly one of those cardinal sayings of Jesus which were often quoted, and not always in exact terms, by early

<sup>1</sup> i. 20, 3.

writers. Secondly, the passage is found also almost in exact parallelism in St Luke (x. 22 ff.) It belongs, accordingly, to the non-Markan source, which is drawn upon both by St Matthew and St Luke, which Wellhausen calls *Q*, and which, being the earliest collection of sayings of Jesus that we know, has been called by critics the very earliest Gospel.<sup>1</sup> This source has been extracted from the evangelic materials and set forth with much ingenuity by Professor Harnack,<sup>2</sup> who has an elaborate and interesting discussion of this very passage. If this collection of discourses, as Holtzmann calls it, is St Matthew's, and if it was written, as Professor Ramsay thinks probable, in the lifetime of Jesus, then it is a witness, remarkable and most precious, to the lofty doctrine of the person of Christ which we find in the Synoptic Gospels and in St John. No wonder that Justin and Irenæus prize it so highly.

There are in Justin sayings attributed to Jesus which have a basis in discourses recorded in St Matthew, but cannot be said to be citations from his Gospel or any other of the four. "The very things which He declared beforehand would happen in His name we see enacted before our eyes and in serious fact. For He said, Many shall come in My name, outwardly arrayed in

<sup>1</sup> Sir William Ramsay, 'Expositor,' May 1907.

<sup>2</sup> Sprüche u. Reden Jesu.

sheep's skins, while inwardly they are ravening wolves. And, There shall be divisions and heresies. And, Beware of false prophets, who shall come to you, outwardly arrayed in sheep's skins, while inwardly they are ravening wolves. And, There shall rise up many false Christs and false apostles, and they shall lead astray many of the faithful.”<sup>1</sup> The predictions of divisions and heresies and false apostles are not found in St Matthew's Gospel, although false Christs and false prophets are predicted in the great eschatological discourse in Matthew xxiv., and in the same discourse the disciples are warned against teachers of error who are to come in His name. St Paul, in his Epistles to the Corinthians, has references to schisms and heresies (1 Cor. xi. 18, 19), and to false apostles (2 Cor. xi. 13). The Clementine Homilies (xvi. 2) combine the two predictions, and Hegesippus<sup>2</sup> speaks of false Christs, false prophets, false apostles. Tertullian and Lactantius attribute to our Lord a prediction of heresies. Considering that Justin writes in the period between the days of oral teaching and those of entire dependence on written Gospels, we should not perhaps go far wrong to say that he has been indebted to oral tradition; and this view would find support from references in other Christian writers. And yet

<sup>1</sup> Dial., c. 35.

<sup>2</sup> Euseb. H. E., IV. 22.

we may have here nothing more than free quotation from the canonical Gospels on the part of Justin, with that rhetorical colour and exaggeration in which he sometimes indulges. Another example of this treatment of the Gospel record is found in the Dialogue with Trypho:<sup>1</sup> “Christ also Himself, saying that the kingdom of heaven is at hand, and that He must suffer many things of the Scribes and Pharisees, and be crucified and rise on the third day, and again present Himself in Jerusalem and there drink again and eat together with His disciples, also predicted that in the interval before His coming again, as I said before, priests and false prophets would arise in His name, and so it seems to have come to pass.” Here we have no quotation from a Gospel, but we do have a *memoriter* blending of words of our Lord with portions of the Gospel narrative. There can be no doubt whatever of the high estimation in which Justin, by the middle of the second century, held the Gospel according to St Matthew.

Ever since Bryennios discovered a complete text of the so-called SECOND EPISTLE OF CLEMENT, it has been recognised that the work is not a letter but a homily. “After the God of truth,” says the writer, “I send to you an exhortation to

<sup>1</sup> c. 51.

the end that ye may give heed to the things which are written, in order that ye may save both yourselves and him that leadeth in the midst of you” (c. xix.) It is clearly one of those exhortations which the president of the Christian assembly delivers after the reading of the Memoirs of the Apostles or the writings of the prophets, of which Justin has spoken.<sup>1</sup> But who the author is we cannot tell. That it was Clement was doubted as long ago as Eusebius, and none of the early writers credit him with more than one epistle. Although Professor Harnack<sup>2</sup> has strongly pressed the claims of Rome as the Church to which it is addressed, the marked allusion to the Grecian games, and probably to the Isthmian festival, in similar terms to St Paul’s well-known allusions in 1 Cor. ix., points more decisively to Corinth. If the audience addressed belonged to Corinth, this fact would explain the dissemination and reputed authorship of the document, for it would thus come to be associated with the genuine Epistle of Clement of Rome to the Corinthians.<sup>3</sup> The internal evidence, in the judgment of Lightfoot, whose opinion is adopted by Stanton against Harnack, points to 140 A.D. as the date of its composition. That the unknown

<sup>1</sup> Ap. i. 67.

<sup>2</sup> Zeitschrift f. Kirchengeschichte, i. 264 ff., 329 ff.

<sup>3</sup> See Lightfoot, ‘Apostolic Fathers,’ ii. 197 ff.

preacher was acquainted with all the Synoptic Gospels is clear, for there are quotations from all of them, St Matthew being still the favourite, though St Luke is not far behind. In chapter ii., after two quotations from Isaiah liv., “Rejoice thou barren that bearest not, . . . for the children of the desolate are more than of her that hath an husband,” the author continues, “again, another Scripture saith, I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.” The quotation agrees exactly with St Mark (ii. 17), but might be taken from St Matthew (ix. 13). In Luke (v. 32) the words *εἰς μετάνοιαν* are added. The formula of quotation not only assigns to the words the character of Scripture, but expressly places them on the level of the Old Testament already quoted. In chapter iv. reference is made to the Sermon on the Mount: “Let us therefore not merely call Him Lord, for this will not save us; for He saith, Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall be saved, but he that doeth righteousness,” which is a free quotation of “Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven” (Matt. vii. 21; cf. Luke vi. 46). In chapter viii. there is a quotation expressly said to be from “the Gospel”: “For the Lord saith in the Gospel, If ye kept not that which is little, who shall give unto you that which is great?

For I say unto you that he which is faithful in the least is faithful also in much." This is a combination of St Luke (xvi. 10) and St Matthew (xxv. 21, 23). In chapter xiv. there is an interesting distinction between the Old and the New Testament: the former he called "The Books" ( $\tauὰ \betaιβλία$ , the Bible), while the latter is called "The Apostles" ( $οἱ ἀπόστολοι$ ). If the latter term implies that the Gospels, to which reference is made, are not yet technically and expressly placed on the level of Holy Scripture, there are expressions elsewhere which substantially include them in that category. The author (c. xiii.) introduces a saying of our Lord in the Gospels with the words "God saith," having immediately before referred to the Oracles of God ( $\tauὰ λόγια τοῦ Θεοῦ$ ) in the same connexion—a mode of expression which surely implies that he regarded the passage read as part of the Word of God. And when towards the close of his discourse he describes the reading of the Scriptures as the voice of "the God of Truth" speaking to the congregation, we feel that there is but a little way to the full recognition of the Gospels as Holy Scripture which we find in Irenæus and Clement of Alexandria. There is a strong resemblance to Justin's manner of quoting, both in the freedom with which citations are given and in the combining of passages from St Matthew and St Luke.

The fact that there is no trace of St John's Gospel need not be taken as implying that it was not known, for the references to St Paul's Epistles, which could not but be well known to the writer, are comparatively few, and the writing from its small size does not give scope for many quotations. No fewer than four sayings are attributed to our Lord which are not to be found in our canonical Gospels. One of them, at least, belongs to the Gospel of the Egyptians, which, with its teaching disparaging the relations between the sexes, never had any wide circulation, and never was a serious rival of the Four Gospels. When we remember that Clement of Alexandria, and even Origen, who drew an absolute line of demarcation between our Four Gospels and any other, still quoted from the Gospel according to the Hebrews in the beginning of the third century, we need not be surprised to find this writer in the middle of the second using an apocryphal Gospel. The Gospel according to St Matthew has at any rate the assured position which it occupies in the earliest Christian writings.

Still earlier there is in the recently recovered *Apology of ARISTIDES, the Athenian*, which was presented to the Emperor Hadrian about 125 A.D., a significant reference to St Matthew's Gospel.

It also relates to the Virgin Birth. “The Christians,” says Aristides in his vindication of the character of his co-religionists, “trace the beginning of their religion to Jesus, the Messiah; and He is named the Son of God Most High. And it is said that God came down from heaven, and from a Hebrew virgin assumed and clothed Himself with flesh; and the Son of God lived in a daughter of man. This is taught from that Gospel which a little while ago was spoken among them as being preached; wherein if ye also will read, ye will comprehend the power which is upon it.”<sup>1</sup> It is, upon the whole, rather St Matthew than St Luke who is referred to: “Behold a virgin shall be with child and shall bring forth a Son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is God with us” (Matt. i. 23). But in the reference, the words “the Son of God Most High” are suggestive of St Luke. That it was from a written and authoritative record that Aristides makes his appeal to the Emperor seems clear from the context; and in another place he designates his source “the writings of the Christians” (c. xvii.)

<sup>1</sup> *Apology of Aristides*, c. ii.

## CHAPTER IX.

## ST MATTHEW.—II.

ABOUT the same time as Aristides there is testimony to St Matthew from Phrygia, in Asia Minor, which is of special interest and significance. It comes from PAPIAS, the Bishop of Hierapolis, who in a fragment of his ‘Expositions of the Oracles of the Lord,’ which Eusebius has preserved, expressly designates Matthew the author of a Gospel. Irenæus,<sup>1</sup> in referring to his great work in five books, calls him “an ancient man”—“a man near to the beginning” (*ἀρχαῖος ἀνήρ*)<sup>2</sup>—a hearer of John the Apostle and a companion of Polycarp. He was a man whose early career belonged to the Apostolic age and the beginnings of Church life in Asia. Eusebius questions the statement of Irenæus that Papias was a hearer of John the Apostle, and the subject

<sup>1</sup> *Adversus Hæreses*, v. 33. 4; cf. Euseb. *H. E.*, III. 39.

<sup>2</sup> See Zahn, *Forschungen*, vi. 110 ff.

is one of the most intricate and perplexed in early Christian literature. But the testimony of Irenæus, who was himself a hearer of Polycarp, is to be preferred in a matter of this kind, especially as Eusebius is not without a certain bias against Papias for his millenarianism, and has, as we shall see, an interest in making him out to be the disciple of another John. Papias, at any rate, was in a position to ascertain and to record particulars relating to the Apostles and early founders of the Church. At Hierapolis there lived apparently to a long age Philip and his daughters. Whether this was Philip the Evangelist, whom St Paul found at Cæsarea on his last journey to Jerusalem, and who had four daughters possessed of prophetic gift (Acts xxi. 8, 9), as ancient writers assert; or Philip the Apostle, who ended his days in Hierapolis, and had three daughters, one of whom "lived in the Spirit,"<sup>1</sup> is of little consequence, because in either case particulars such as Papias is represented as obtaining from them went back to the earliest days of the Church. In his 'Expositions,' which may be referred to about 125 A.D., Papias incorporated many incidents and particulars which he had gathered through a long life, and which bore upon the Gospel histories. If only this treatise were to come to light like the 'Didache,' the

<sup>1</sup> Euseb. H. E., III. 39.

'Gospel of Peter,' the 'Apology of Aristides,' and other valuable finds of recent years, we should obtain the solution of problems and difficulties which the fragments of it have raised for the critic and the historian.

The question as to the precise character of these 'Expositions' (*λογίων κυριακῶν ἐξηγήσεις*) has produced a large controversial literature. In his brilliant 'Essays on Supernatural Religion'<sup>1</sup> the late Bishop Lightfoot brought his great learning and keen historical imagination to the examination of this subject. Against his opponent, who held that Papias had no knowledge of our Gospels, he established to the satisfaction of many scholars that the work of Papias consisted of three strata: (1) a written text, in all likelihood comprising our Gospels; (2) interpretations explaining the text and forming the main object of the work; and (3) oral traditions illustrative of these interpretations, which Papias had made it his aim, evidently for a long time before writing, to gather from the elders, and followers of the elders, and survivors of the Apostolic age; "for," he explains, "I did not think that what was to be obtained from books would profit me so much as that which came from a living and abiding voice."<sup>2</sup> He mentions Gospels by St Mark and St Matthew,

<sup>1</sup> See the Essays on Papias of Hierapolis, pp. 142-216.

<sup>2</sup> Euseb., III. 39. 4.

and there is good reason to believe that he was acquainted with those by St Luke and St John. They would lie at the basis of his work. An extract from the work of Papias is given by Irenæus<sup>1</sup> with reference to the millennial reign : “ As the elders who saw John the disciple of the Lord relate that they had heard from him how the Lord was wont to teach and speak of those times : Days will come when vines will grow each having ten thousand shoots, and on each shoot ten thousand branches, and on each branch ten thousand twigs, and on each twig ten thousand clusters, and in each cluster ten thousand grapes, and each grape when pressed shall yield twenty-five measures of wine. . . . These things Papias testifies in writing in the fourth of his books. And he added, saying : These things, however, are credible to them that believe. And when Judas, the traitor, did not believe, but asked, How shall such growths be accomplished by the Lord ? Papias says the Lord said : They shall see who shall come to those times.” It is such traditions passed from mouth to mouth which Papias uses to illustrate his expositions and prefers to the productions of Gnostic writers like Basilides and Valentinus already in circulation, which are “ the books ” he evidently has in view.<sup>2</sup>

His testimony to St Matthew is as follows :—

<sup>1</sup> *Adversus Hæreses*, v. 33. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Lightfoot, p. 161.

"So then Matthew compiled his oracles ( $\tauὰ λόγια$ ) in the Hebrew tongue, and every one interpreted them as he was able."<sup>1</sup>

The following considerations may help to elucidate this difficult statement:—

1. On one particular amid many points of diversity there is unanimity among scholars. When we find the word Hebrew employed we may be sure that Aramaic is meant—the dialect of Hebrew which was vernacular among the inhabitants of Palestine in the time of our Lord—the original language of the Gospel, inasmuch as it was the language in which He uttered the discourses recorded in the Gospels and all the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth.

2. A question as to which there is still great divergence of opinion is the precise meaning of "compiling his oracles." Schleiermacher suggested that it meant a collection of our Lord's discourses and sayings which St Matthew had put together. This view has been adopted by scholars of eminence, and in the "criticism of sources" which is presently so much in vogue it occupies a conspicuous place. It is held that this collection of discourses made by the Apostle Matthew, and described by Papias, is one of the most important sources of the First Gospel, and that from it the

<sup>1</sup> Euseb. H. E., III. 39. 16.

Gospel takes the name of St Matthew. Professor Burton of Chicago finds certain longer discourses which have no parallel in either St Mark or St Luke, and certain shorter sayings of Jesus, comprising together about 230 verses, or a little over one-fifth of the whole Gospel of St Matthew. “The comparison of the Gospels,” he says,<sup>1</sup> “certainly suggests that these passages constituted a source of our Gospel of Matthew. It is in favour of the supposition that they in fact were contained in, or constituted, the original collection of sayings of Jesus to which Papias refers, that it conforms to this ancient and undisputed tradition, and that it explains, as no theory which makes the Matthæan Logia a source of both Matthew and Luke or of all three Synoptists can explain, how the present Gospel of Matthew obtained the name. On this view the present Gospel naturally took the name of that old document which it alone, of our present Gospels at least, reproduced, and of which it might almost be considered an enlarged edition.”

This hypothesis has found favour with critics of opposite schools, but it has serious difficulties to encounter. First, there is no clear trace in early Christian antiquity of any such collection existing by itself, and independently of St Matthew’s

<sup>1</sup> Principles of Literary Criticism and the Synoptic Problem, p. 41. Compare W. C. Allen’s ‘*St Matthew*,’ p. lvi. ff.

Gospel.<sup>1</sup> And secondly, *τὰ λόγια* cannot be restricted to discourses or sayings alone. In the Epistle to the Hebrews (v. 12) *τὰ λόγια τοῦ Θεοῦ* stands for the entire revealed word of God, embracing history and narrative as well as Divine utterances and words. In Romans (iii. 2) St Paul uses *τὰ λόγια τοῦ Θεοῦ* to describe the whole Divine Revelation which was entrusted to the Jews.<sup>2</sup> Lightfoot<sup>3</sup> concludes a careful examination of this point with the assertion that “the oracles” (*τὰ λόγια*) can be used as co-extensive with “the Scriptures” in the time of Papias. And Hilgenfeld,<sup>4</sup> who would not be swayed by bias in a matter of this kind, declares

<sup>1</sup> Professor Harnack, in his recent contribution to New Testament Introduction ('Sprüche und Reden Jesu,' p. 172), after having carefully and skilfully extracted from St Matthew and St Luke the non-Markan document common to them, which consists wholly of discourses with no narrative, and is now generally known as Q, thinks the Matthæan Logia of Papias may probably be that source, but he considers that both Eusebius and Papias understand by Matthew's Logia our St Matthew. The subject is ably discussed by Professor Sir William Ramsay, 'Expositor,' May 1907.

<sup>2</sup> The title *Λόγια Ἰησοῦ*, 'Sayings of our Lord,' is not to be applied to those remarkable collections which Messrs Grenfell and Hunt have discovered at Oxyrhynchus, first in 1897 and again in 1903. In the second instalment of these texts the opening formula is not *τὰ λόγια* but *οἱ λόγοι—οἱ τοῖοι οἱ λόγοι—οὐδὲ ἐλαλησεν Ἰησοῦς*—suggesting Acts xx. 35 and 1 Clement xiii., where we have the same formula, “remembering the words of the Lord Jesus (*τὰν λόγων τοῦ Κυρίου Ἰησοῦ*) how He said.”

<sup>3</sup> Essays on Supernatural Religion, p. 176.

<sup>4</sup> Einleitung in das Neue Testament, p. 456.

that of a mere account of the sayings of Jesus Papias has no thought: “Not a mere collection of sayings, but a complete Gospel is what Papias regards Matthew as having written in Hebrew.”

3. There is now the question whether any such Gospel, written in Hebrew, was known in early Christian antiquity. Papias is not our only authority for the existence of a Hebrew Gospel of Matthew. Irenæus, who knew the Four Gospels so well, and held them to be of exclusive authority, traces them back to the Apostles themselves, and says of St Matthew:<sup>1</sup> “Matthew published his Gospel among the Hebrews in their own language while Peter and Paul were preaching and founding the Church in Rome.” Whether the account of Irenæus was exclusively dependent upon Papias we cannot tell, but Origen, whose writings show not the slightest acquaintance with the work of Papias, speaks of a Hebrew Matthew with as much confidence as Irenæus, who had read Papias’s book. Eusebius<sup>2</sup> records the journey of Pantænus to the East and his discovery among the people of India—possibly the people of South Arabia—of a Hebrew Gospel of Matthew, which had been left to them by Bartholomew the Apostle; and in another place<sup>3</sup> he states that “Matthew, who had at first preached to the Hebrews, when he was

<sup>1</sup> *Adversus*, iii. 1. 1.

<sup>2</sup> *H. E.*, V. 10. 3.

<sup>3</sup> *H. E.*, III. 24. 6.

about to go to other peoples committed his Gospel to writing in his native tongue, and thus compensated those whom he was obliged to leave for the loss of his presence." Jerome and Epiphanius recognise the existence of the work, although when Jerome speaks of the Hebrew original of St Matthew as a book in his possession he means rather the Gospel of the Nazarenes; and Epiphanius appears to be under the influence of a similar confusion. That there had been a Gospel, bearing the name of Matthew and circulating in Aramaic in the early days of Christianity, is witnessed by a continuous tradition from Papias to Eusebius.<sup>1</sup>

4. This early Aramaic Gospel of Matthew was apparently no longer in existence in the time of Eusebius. If there had been a copy extant anywhere, it surely would have been in the library of Pamphilus, which was at the historian's service. Even in the time of Papias it was probably no longer in use, for Papias refers to the time when each one translated it as already lying in the past. That this translating referred to written translations or revisions of St Matthew's writing does not require to be supposed. It is much more in accordance with probability that oral translation is what Papias had in his mind. But what is here in view is that Christians who had know-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Zahn, 'Das Evangelium des Matthäus,' pp. 18, 19.

ledge of Aramaic and Greek endeavoured to make the contents of this Aramaic Gospel intelligible to congregations with little or no knowledge of this language. Zahn<sup>1</sup> considers that it was never the book of Matthew which was translated, but always and only single sections from it, and, what was the chief point for Papias, always a portion of the Lord's sayings (*λόγια κυριακά*). And he says it was not Christian worship as conducted in his younger years which Papias describes,—“In this case he would have used the imperfect (*ήρμηνευε*) to express the fact that the reading of sections of Scripture in Greek was exchanged for the translation of Hebrew passages. Neither does he describe a condition of things in existence at the time when he wrote (*έρμηνεύει*), but employs the aorist (*ήρμηνευσε*) to indicate that it was something belonging entirely to the past. It was so once; when Papias wrote it was no longer necessary.”<sup>2</sup> By this time the Greek Matthew with which we are familiar had taken its place. From the ‘Didache,’ from the ‘Epistle of Barnabas,’ and from Polycarp’s ‘Epistle to the Philippians’ we know that the Greek Matthew was already widely known and circulated. How the transition was made from the Hebrew Matthew to the Greek is one of those questions upon which we have no

<sup>1</sup> Einleitung in das Neue Testament, ii. 510 (Eng. trans.)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 514 (Eng. trans.)

information. But it must have been made early, and the Greek Gospel must have always been held to be a complete substitute for the Hebrew book, and never bore any other name than that of St Matthew.

5. Professor Zahn<sup>1</sup> is of opinion that the transition was made through the Aramaic Matthew being translated by some unknown hand, or, as with the Targums and the Latin Bible, a succession of hands, at a very early period into Greek, which soon achieved a wide circulation. There need be no prejudice against such a translation, which is intrinsically probable. As Jesus made use of Aramaic in preaching to the people and instructing His disciples, all the discourses of Jesus, and the words spoken by Him to the Jews who had intercourse with Him, had to pass through a process of translation in order to be recorded for us in our Greek Gospels. Not in St Matthew alone, but in St Mark and St Luke as well, commentators refer words of Jesus from time to time to an Aramaic original in order to understand them fully, or to explain the different forms in which they occur in the tradition. In his learned 'Commentary on St Matthew,' Professor Zahn makes this assumption of translation a cardinal point in his exegesis; and Wellhausen, in his Commentaries on the Synoptic Gospels,

<sup>1</sup> Einleitung in das Neue Testament, ii. 515 (Eng. trans.)

goes back also to the Aramaic foundation of portions of the narrative.

That the Gospel according to Matthew appeared at first in an Aramaic dress seems to be established by the testimony of Papias, corroborated by other witnesses whom we have adduced. That the Greek St Matthew is substantially identical with this Hebrew Gospel of Matthew known to Papias appears to me in the highest degree probable. There are, however, drawbacks which must leave our conclusion short of certainty.

(1) It cannot be affirmed with any strong show of evidence that our present St Matthew reads like a translation from Aramaic into Greek. It has, in the judgment of many scholars, all the marks of an original and independent composition. The latest English commentator of note<sup>1</sup> asserts that "our First Gospel was not originally written in Hebrew, nor is it likely that in its present form it is the work of an Apostle." So important a witness as Dr G. Dalman, in his 'Words of Jesus,' casts the weight of his name into the scale against the view that there was an Aramaic Gospel of Matthew.

(2) It is difficult to account for the similarities found in the Marcan sections of St Matthew on the assumption that St Matthew wrote in

<sup>1</sup> W. C. Allen, 'International Commentary,' on St Matthew, p. lxxx.

Hebrew, and that his Gospel was not translated into Greek till, say, 85 A.D., as Zahn maintains. But until we are better able to estimate the influence of oral tradition in the making of our Gospels, and until the relations between the Synoptic Gospels are more satisfactorily cleared up, it is premature to press for a final solution of a literary question like this.

It is a great deal to be assured that by 125 A.D., and on any view of the fragment of Papias, a considerable time before, the Gospel according to Matthew was in circulation among the churches of Phrygia as an authoritative record of the Life and Teaching of Jesus, and bearing the name of the Apostle called from the receipt of custom to follow Christ.

That the Greek St Matthew was in existence from a very early period is clear from the testimony of the Apostolic Fathers. Passing from Papias, the first witness to be considered is one whose period overlaps that of the Phrygian Bishop, POLYCARP of Smyrna. As a personal hearer of St John, along with Papias and others who had seen the Lord, he is able to attest the harmony between the reminiscences of those early disciples and the written records of the Lord's miracles and teaching. "I am able to describe the very place in which the blessed Polycarp sat as he discoursed, and his goings out and

his comings in, and the manner of his life, and his physical appearance, and his discourses to the people, and the accounts which he gave of his intercourse with John and with the others who had seen the Lord. And as he remembered their words, and what he heard from them concerning the Lord and concerning His miracles and His teaching, having received them from eye-witnesses of the Word of Life, Polycarp reported all things in conformity with the written records,” is the testimony of Irenæus<sup>1</sup> regarding one whom he reverenced as a father in the Gospel. That “the written records” thus referred to were the Gospels is questioned by Professor Harnack,<sup>2</sup> who regards the expression as meaning the Old Testament Scriptures, but on grounds which are unconvincing. The testimony of a personality situated as Polycarp was is specially valuable. We have from his own hand only a single letter written ‘To the Philippians’; and we have also the ‘Martyrdom of Polycarp,’ probably from a contemporary hand, giving particulars of his death. The letter to the Philippians, however, was written long before his martyrdom. Its purpose was to acknowledge receipt of letters from the Philippian Christians relating the behaviour of Ignatius as he passed

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Florinus, Euseb. H. E., V. 20.

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 63.

through Philippi, along the Via Egnatia, on the way to martyrdom at Rome. It must, therefore, date somewhere between 107 A.D. and 117 A.D., the limits within which the martyrdom of Ignatius is believed to lie. Polycarp has in all between thirty and forty coincidences with the language of New Testament Scripture, although the number of cases in which he refers to Old Testament Scripture is small. Of the Evangelists we can be fairly sure that he was acquainted with St Matthew. He quotes<sup>1</sup> as follows from the Sermon on the Mount: "Remembering what the Lord said as He taught—Judge not that ye be not judged; forgive and it shall be forgiven to you; have mercy, that ye may obtain mercy; with what measure ye mete, it shall be meted to you again. And, Blessed are the poor, and the persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. v. 3, 7; vii. 12; cf. Luke vi. 20, 36-38). And again,<sup>2</sup> "Praying the All-seeing God with supplications not to lead us into temptation (Matt. vi. 13), as the Lord said, The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak" (Matt.

<sup>1</sup> Ep. to Phil., c. ii. 3. The first clauses here have parallels in Clement of Rome and in Clement of Alexandria, but there is no ground for believing that they came from any other record than our Gospels. See Westcott, 'Canon,' p. 62; Stanton, 'The Gospels as Historical Documents,' pp. 25, 27.

<sup>2</sup> C. vii.

xxvi. 41). These references which we claim for St Matthew show affinities sometimes with St Mark and sometimes with St Luke; but though they do not absolutely infer quotation from any one of them, they at least suggest the knowledge in the Philippian Christians of a body of truth like the Sermon on the Mount as it is recorded in St Matthew. Having evidence of the existence of St Matthew's Gospel from Polycarp's contemporary, Papias, we naturally assign the quotations which have a certain measure of verbal agreement, and entire agreement with its contents, to that Gospel. The Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians is very brief, and allows but little scope for quotation; and yet into its texture are woven unmistakable allusions to 1 Peter, 1 John, and more than one Epistle of St Paul. "St Matthew," says Professor Stanton,<sup>1</sup> "is the only one of the Synoptic Gospels, the signs of the use of which in the sub-Apostolic age are really impressive." It is just this Gospel which the critics at the present time are least disposed to acknowledge as the work of an Apostle, and these early references to it are the more welcome.

<sup>1</sup> *The Gospels as Historical Documents*, p. 17.

## CHAPTER X.

ST MATTHEW.—III.

THE Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians was in all probability of the same date as the Ignatian Epistles, the history of which it in a manner continues. IGNATIUS, Bishop of Antioch, had been condemned to be thrown to the wild beasts at Rome in one of the persecutions which arose in the reign of Trajan. From Antioch to Smyrna he had travelled by land under the charge of a maniple of Roman soldiers, whom he calls ten leopards; and at Smyrna he wrote letters to the Ephesian, the Magnesian, and the Trallian Christians, whose representatives met him at Smyrna; and also to the Roman Christians, to whom he was going, and whom he begged to do nothing that would tend to save his life and rob him of the crown of martyrdom. After leaving Smyrna he halted at Troas, from which he would make the passage across the *Æ*gean to reach the Via Egnatia

at Neapolis, and there he wrote a letter of thankful remembrance to the Smyrnæan Christians, another to Polycarp their bishop, and still another to the Christians of Philadelphia, whom he had seen on his way by the northern road from Antioch to Smyrna. These seven, amid a mass of letters which have come down to us in three different recensions, are now, thanks to the labours of Lightfoot, Zahn, Harnack, and other scholars, recognised as genuine; and falling as they do within the second decade of the second century, they are of the very greatest value in their bearing upon the Gospels. Of his significant testimony to St John's Gospel we shall hear in another chapter. Of the Synoptics, the parallels in Ignatius are much closer to St Matthew than to St Mark or St Luke. Indeed, there is hardly a parallel that can be maintained with St Mark, and only one or two with St Luke, whereas there are eight references which may without hesitation be assigned to St Matthew, and one or two more of somewhat doubtful claims. In the opening of the Epistle to the Smyrnæans (chap. i.), Ignatius exultingly honours Christ as "being truly of the family of David according to the flesh, Son of God according to the will and power of God, born truly of the Virgin, baptised by John in order that all righteousness might be fulfilled by

Him." The reference here is undoubtedly to St Matthew (iii. 15), because he alone of the Evangelists gives this motive for our Lord's baptism. In other letters<sup>1</sup> Ignatius says, "These are not the planting of the Father"; and "Keep yourselves away from evil plants, which Jesus Christ does not cultivate, because they are not the Father's planting,"—the reference in both being to the words of Jesus recorded by St Matthew (xv. 13), "Every plant which my Heavenly Father did not plant shall be rooted up." Another interesting parallel is found in the letter to Polycarp (c. i.), where Ignatius exhorts him—"Bear all as also the Lord beareth thee. . . . Bear the sicknesses of all like a perfect athlete." Here the somewhat unusual word (*βάσταζε*) is that of St Matthew, and not the word of the LXX translating the well-known passage of Isaiah (liii. 4) on which it is founded, and it can scarcely be doubted that Ignatius has taken it from our First Gospel (Matt. viii. 17). In the same letter (c. ii.) and in the very next verses we seem to have reminiscences of St Matthew again: "If you love disciples who are good, no thanks to you for it: rather by meekness subdue the more pestilent. Every wound is not healed by the same application: stay violent attacks with gentle applications. Be

<sup>1</sup> Trallians, xi. 1; Philad., iii. 1.

thou wise as a serpent in all things, and always harmless as the dove" (Matt. v. 46, x. 16). In the Epistle to the Ephesians<sup>1</sup> Ignatius has a reference to the incident of the anointing of the Lord at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, which is recorded by St Matthew, St Mark, and St John: "For this cause," says Ignatius, "the Lord received ointment upon His head that He might breathe immortality upon His Church." In St John it was not the head but the feet which Mary anointed. As between St Matthew and St Mark, the verbal coincidence is more on the side of St Matthew (xxvi. 6), which is most likely the source of the reference. In the Epistle to the Magnesians there is a very striking reference to the *descensus ad inferos*, and Christ is represented as having visited the souls of patriarchs and prophets and to have raised them up. "How," exclaims Ignatius,<sup>2</sup> "shall we be able to live without Him for whom the prophets waited as their teacher, being His disciples by the Spirit? And because of this, He whom they righteously waited for, when He was come, raised them from the dead." This refers in all probability to the difficult passage in St Matthew (xxvii. 52), where we read "Many bodies of the saints that had fallen asleep arose; and coming forth from the

<sup>1</sup> Ephes. xvii. i.

<sup>2</sup> Magnes. ix. 3.

tombs after His rising, entered into the Holy City and appeared unto many." There are also allusions which point to the Synoptic tradition—such as "Be ye salted in Him"<sup>1</sup> (Matt. v. 13, Mark ix. 50, Luke xiv. 34); and "The tree is known by its fruit"<sup>2</sup> (Matt. xii. 33, Luke vi. 44). There are other passages in which traces or echoes of the Gospel of St Matthew are to be found, but the proofs of the knowledge of this Gospel by Ignatius are sufficiently clear. It is a question whether he is not indebted to some other source for the statement—highly coloured even for Ignatius—that at our Lord's manifestation to the ages "a star shone in heaven above all the stars, and its light was inexpressible, and its strangeness caused astonishment; and all the rest of the constellations, with sun and moon, formed themselves into a chorus round it, while it with its light outshone them all."<sup>3</sup> Ignatius keeps so strictly within the Gospel tradition, that it is very doubtful whether we need to go beyond the star in the East in the second chapter of St Matthew for the allusion, which contains also a manifest reminiscence of Joseph's early dream (Gen. xxxvii. 9).

From Ignatius we pass on upwards to CLEMENT OF ROME. His First Epistle to the Corinthians,

<sup>1</sup> Magnes. x. 2.<sup>2</sup> Ephes. xiv. 2.<sup>3</sup> Ephes. xix. 2.

which is usually set down to 96 A.D., and is written by him in name of the Church of Rome, contains numerous and lengthened quotations from the Old Testament, especially from the Pentateuch, the Psalms, and the Prophet Isaiah, occupying in all nearly a quarter of the whole Epistle. But whilst he quotes so copiously, he gives no references to Old Testament books. His formulæ of quotation are fairly numerous and varied (*λέγει γάρ που: συνεπιμαρτυρούσης καὶ τῆς γραφῆς: οὕτω γὰρ γέγραπται: ὡς ἐπαγγειλαμένου τοῦ Θεοῦ: οὕτως γάρ φησιν ὁ Θεός: προλέγει γὰρ ἡμῖν*). His Old Testament quotations are often very loose, and his manner of quotation in the New Testament is marked by the same characteristic, so that verbal divergence from the canonical text need not imply any other source. The Epistle to the Hebrews is quoted at least a dozen times, and St Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, perhaps both Epistles, are alluded to by name. Of references to the Gospels that can be tabulated there are not more than a dozen altogether, and of these not more than four can be attributed to St Matthew. One reference brings into juxtaposition a passage of an ancient prophet—Jeremiah—and words of our Lord in the Sermon on the Mount. Clement first quotes<sup>1</sup> Jeremiah (ix. 23, 24), “Let us do according as it stands

<sup>1</sup> I Cor. xiii.

written (for the Holy Spirit saith, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, neither let the rich man glory in his riches, but rather let him that glorieth glory in the Lord, to seek Him, and to do judgment and righteousness), especially remembering the words of the Lord Jesus which He uttered as He taught meekness and patience, for thus He said, Be merciful, that ye may obtain mercy; forgive, that ye may be forgiven; as ye do, it shall be done unto you; as ye give, so shall it be given to you; as ye judge, so shall ye be judged; as ye show kindness, so shall kindness be shown to you; with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you" (Matt. vi. 14, 15; vii. 1, 2; Luke vi. 31, 36-38). Another reference<sup>1</sup> strongly suggesting St Matthew, but also St Mark and St Luke, is, "Remember the words of Jesus our Lord: for He said, Woe to that man; it were better for him that he had not been born than that he should make one of My chosen ones to offend; it were better for him that a millstone were hanged round his neck and he cast into the sea, than that he should cause one of My little ones to stumble" (Matt. xxvi. 24, xviii. 6; Mark ix. 42; Luke xviii. 2). The occurrence here of the rare word translated "cast into the sea" (*καταποντίζεσθαι*), used by St Matthew alone of the New

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xlvi.

Testament writers, fixes the main reference as being to St Matthew. Clement shows no signs of knowing other Gospels than the canonical Four, and his Christian literature mirrors itself not merely in the few direct quotations. It lies behind his way of thinking, behind his way of putting things, and behind his language. Nothing in this Epistle points to other writings, and his testimony can be claimed without hesitation for St Matthew's Gospel.<sup>1</sup> "These Epistles of Clement and Polycarp," says Dr Charteris<sup>2</sup>—and we may add those of Ignatius—"imply the previous acceptance of the existing documents and doctrines of the New Testament; and the very fact that in the case of those to whom they were writing, as in their own, they constantly assume that the religion of Jesus Christ has been known and believed, is a powerful testimony to the acceptance of the same facts, and the prevalence of the same truth. We may see that Clement knew his readers to be more familiar with the life of Jesus Christ than with the biographies of Old Testament saints; for when he speaks of Abraham, or Moses, or David, he thinks it necessary to remind them of the general character of the life, whereas a simple allusion to

<sup>1</sup> Compare Gregory, 'Canon and Text of the New Testament,' p. 66.

<sup>2</sup> Canonicity, p. xvii.

the facts of the history of Jesus Christ is enough."

Clement represents Rome; our next witness represents Alexandria. This is the Epistle of BARNABAS, one of the most ancient witnesses, although it is not possible to define his place in the patristic succession with exactitude. Harnack places the Epistle at 130-131 A.D., and Lightfoot somewhere between 70-79. The latest discussions indicate no ground for placing the Epistle later than the first century. It was apparently written when Jerusalem and the Temple were already in ruins, and Ælia Capitolina had not been founded. It is now almost unanimously agreed that Barnabas, "the son of consolation" (Acts iv. 36), was not the author.<sup>1</sup> Judging from the fact that it was in Egypt that the Epistle was first known and most highly esteemed, we should say that Alexandria was the place of its composition. What, then, are the Gospels known to the writer, whoever he may have been? St Mark and St Luke can hardly be said to find any attestation; but it is scarcely possible to doubt the knowledge and use of St Matthew. There are at least two or three clear indications of knowledge of our First Gospel. "Let us give heed," says the writer,<sup>2</sup> "lest, as

<sup>1</sup> My venerated predecessor, Professor Milligan, who wrote the article "Barnabas" in Smith's Dictionary, held to the view that the apostolic Barnabas was the author.

<sup>2</sup> Bar. iv. 14.

it is written ( $\omega\varsigma \gamma\acute{e}yrap\pi\tauai$ ), we be found many called but few chosen" (Matt. xx. 16, xxii. 14). The expression, "as it is written," occurs now for the first time in its application to New Testament Scripture. It is worth noticing that it was only when the Sinaitic Manuscript was discovered by Tischendorf in 1859, with a complete Greek text of Barnabas incorporated in it, that the reading  $\omega\varsigma \gamma\acute{e}yrap\pi\tauai$  was ascertained for certain. The expression points at least to a written record, and it is important as showing that this record was treated by the author of the Epistle as Scripture, on the same footing as the Old Testament, which is cited with the same formula. Another clear parallel with St Matthew is,<sup>1</sup> "When He chose as His own Apostles to go and preach His Gospel men who were wicked beyond all sin, in order that He might show that He did not come to call righteous men, but sinners, He thus manifested Himself to be the Son of God."<sup>2</sup> It was an early charge brought against Christianity that its first preachers were some of them taken from the lowest of the people, and Celsus in particular made it, founding, as Origen<sup>3</sup> thinks, on the exaggerated language used "in the Catholic Epistle of Barnabas." Barnabas<sup>4</sup> in another place gives an

<sup>1</sup> Bar. v. 9.

<sup>2</sup> The best texts of St Matthew read here, "For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners" (Matt. ix. 13).

<sup>3</sup> *Contra Cels.*, i. 63.

<sup>4</sup> Bar. xii. 11.

interpretation of Psalm cx., which he may very well have derived from our Lord's words in His disputation with the Pharisees, recorded in St Matthew (xxii. 45). The author quotes frequently from the Old Testament, and he cites his authorities with varying degrees of accuracy. Dr Sanday<sup>1</sup> reckoned sixteen exact, twenty-three slightly variant, and forty-seven variant citations of the Old Testament in the Epistle. It was to be expected that his New Testament citations would have something of the same character, and we see this in his references to St Paul's Epistles, of which Romans and Ephesians are quoted. There need be no hesitation in admitting his Gospel citations, even though they may not all be exact. There is a saying, supposed to be attributed to Jesus, which is not found in the Gospels<sup>2</sup>—"So, He says, they who wish to see Me and to attain unto My kingdom must receive Me in tribulation and suffering." It may, however, be no more than a dramatic enforcement of the meaning of the emblem of the scarlet wool caught in the bramble bush, referred to in the preceding sentences. But the quotations already given, and other allusions or echoes, all point to the ancient and much-quoted Gospel according to Matthew.

From Irenæus, Hippolytus, Epiphanius, and others who have left particulars of the views

<sup>1</sup> Gospels in the Second Century, p. 31 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Bar. vii. 11.

of EARLY HERETICS, we gather what was their attitude to the New Testament books. The Ebionites appear to have known of a Hebrew Gospel of St Matthew. The Ophites, while apparently acquainted with apocryphal writings, allude also to New Testament books, and are known to have used St Matthew. Cerinthus, the contemporary of St John at Ephesus, was acquainted with St Matthew's genealogy of our Lord, but denied the Supernatural Birth, making Jesus to be the son of Joseph and Mary, and the Christ to descend upon Him at His baptism. From what Hippolytus tells us of Simon Magus and his heresy, we may infer that he had some acquaintance with St Matthew's Gospel.<sup>1</sup>

We have thus traced the existence and use and growing authority of our First Gospel up to the last decades of the first century. It is with the TEACHING OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES that we reach in all probability the earliest written records which have survived outside the canon of New Testament Scripture.<sup>2</sup> The discovery of this early Christian document by Bryennios in the library of the Jerusalem Monastery of the Holy Sepulchre at Constantinople in 1873, in a manuscript volume containing complete Greek texts of the two Epistles of

<sup>1</sup> Canonicity, p. 384.

<sup>2</sup> Funk, *Patres Apostolici*, pp. vi-xix.

Clement and other writings, was a notable event in the history of patristic literature. The Didache or Teaching is referred to in early lists of Christian books, and is included by Eusebius among his spurious books along with the Shepherd and others. It is even quoted (as is the Shepherd) by Clement of Alexandria as inspired Scripture, and such quotation is at least a tribute to its high antiquity. It is a moot-point whether Barnabas quotes from the Didache or the Didache from Barnabas, but there are many considerations favouring the former alternative. Hermas, in the Shepherd, appropriates almost verbatim passages of the Didache.<sup>1</sup> Its date may be fixed somewhere between 80 and 90 A.D. Here again St Matthew is the best known Gospel,<sup>2</sup> —in fact, it appears to be the only one known to the writer. St Luke may be alluded to twice or thrice; St Mark once; St John's cannot be referred to, for it was not yet written, and yet there

<sup>1</sup> Mandat ii. 4-6; compare with Did., cc. i. 5, 6; iv. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Of express references to Scripture there are eight in the whole book. Two of them are to the Old Testament, with the formula of quotation—“For this is what was spoken by the Lord, as it was said.” Five are to the Gospel—(1) “As the Lord commanded in His Gospel” (viii. 2); (2) “Concerning this the Lord has said” (ix. 5); (3) “According to the decree of the Gospel” (xv. 3); (4) “As ye have it in the Gospel of our Lord” (xv. 4); (5) “As ye have it in the Gospel” (xv. 3); and one is to an unknown authority —“Concerning this it has been said” (i. 6). It is undoubtedly St Matthew which is the Gospel of the Didache.

are expressions which might be taken to show signs of his influence. There are twenty-five coincidences with St Matthew, and as the Didache was probably written in Palestine, it is natural that St Matthew should be its authority. It is in the Didache<sup>1</sup> that we find the first notice of the Lord's Prayer outside the New Testament, given in the form in which our Evangelist has recorded it. It has the Doxology, which is omitted in the oldest manuscripts and versions, and now also in our Revised Version; and it gives it with only very slight verbal variations, the most important of which is the omission of "the kingdom," so that it runs, "For thine is the power and the glory for ever." There is also a word-for-word quotation of the Baptismal formula,<sup>2</sup>—"Baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. xxviii. 19). Notable too is the version given<sup>3</sup> of the Golden Rule, which takes a negative form, as contrasted with the positive form in St Matthew and St Luke: "All things whatsoever thou wouldest not should be done to thee, do thou also not to another." It is not given in the Didache with a formula of quotation, and we cannot, perhaps, claim the reference as exclusively to St Matthew.<sup>4</sup> It does,

<sup>1</sup> Did., c. viii.

<sup>2</sup> Did., c. vii.

<sup>3</sup> Did., c. i.

<sup>4</sup> The negative form of the Golden Rule is older than the Gospels, and was current among the Jews at an earlier time. In the Talmud

however, differ verbally from any of the Rabbinical forms, and the frequency of the references to St Matthew otherwise makes the allusion to the First Gospel probable, even though put in a negative form. To the Great Invitation (Matt. xi. 28) there is what is regarded by critics of various schools as a clear reference in "the yoke of the Lord,"<sup>1</sup>—"If thou canst bear the whole yoke of the Lord, thou shalt be perfect,"<sup>2</sup> where the easy yoke of Christ, in His gracious teaching and commands, is contrasted with the yoke of the law of Moses and the additions of the Pharisees, which their fathers were not able to bear (Acts xv. 10). Whilst most of the references are to discourses and sayings of Jesus, there are allusions also to incidents in the Gospel history as recorded by St Matthew; and it is attributed to Hillel in the form, "Do not to thy neighbour what is disagreeable to thee." In Tobit (iv. 15) it appears in the form, "What thou thyself hatest, do to no man"; and in Philo almost the same, "What any one hates to endure, do not to him." The Stoics had it in this negative form, and Isocrates, the Attic orator, put it in this form, "What stirs your anger when done to you by others, that do not to them." Buddhist and Chinese ethics are said to possess the negative form also. Dr Charles Taylor derives the saying from the Second Table of the Law by supposing a question asked, "What are those things which thou shalt not do to thy neighbour?" And the answer given, "What to thyself is hateful." Thus the origin of the saying would be accounted for, and its description as the sum total of the Law. See C. Taylor, 'Sayings of the Fathers'; Erich Bischoff, 'Jesus und die Rabbinen,' p. 92.

<sup>1</sup> Did., c. vi. See Funk, *ad loc.*

<sup>2</sup> Harnack, *Sprüche und Reden Jesu*, p. 213 n.

from the quotations of the Didache we gather that already our First Gospel was employed for purposes of Christian edification and instruction, as well as for imparting information regarding the Life and Teaching and Death and Resurrection and Second Coming of the Lord. When we bring the use of the Gospel in the Churches thus within the first century, we can see that it may well have been in existence from the seventh decade, as is indicated by Irenæus, or, if that refer to the Aramaic Gospel, we may still regard the Greek recension as coming from a time not much later.

The tradition attributing the First Gospel to St Matthew has the unanimous witness of early Christian antiquity to support it. In the Gospel itself, although St Matthew is referred to, there is nothing to associate him with its authorship. It is true that in his capacity of tax collector St Matthew was a person accustomed to writing, and it was thus within his power to have noted down at a very early date discourses and sayings of Jesus for use in his labours as a preacher of the Gospel with which he was entrusted. And no doubt the name of one of the Twelve, associated with records of the Life and Discourses and Works of Jesus, would be the surest passport to their early acceptance and ultimate canonisation.

These points, however, and the modest references to himself in his Gospel, while they are consistent with St Matthew's authorship, are not sufficient of themselves to have suggested it. There is no apparent motive, other than the fact, which could have induced the early Church to assign the most attractive and most frequently used of all the Gospels to one of the least notable of all the Apostles of Christ. If the object had been to palm off a Gospel upon the Church, or to give an air of Apostolicity to a collection of legends and ethical teachings which came to be associated with Jesus within the circles of the faithful, it would surely have been one of the best known and most conspicuous of the Apostles that would have been selected to bear the weight of such responsibility and honour. "Matthew, the publican," it has been said,<sup>1</sup> "is the last person—with the possible exception of Judas Iscariot—upon whom a reader of the Gospels would fix as a plausible father for one of them." We are, therefore, constrained to believe that the tradition associating the name of St Matthew with the First Gospel from the time when it first began to circulate, which is confirmed by Papias, and never questioned by any Gnostic writer, and finally placed beyond dispute by Irenæus, is

<sup>1</sup> *Expositor*, July 1906, p. 75.

based not upon learned conjecture but upon facts which in that age were incontrovertible.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Zahn, *Einleitung*, ii. 392 (English translation). Zahn's judgment of this Gospel is worth quoting, as that of one who has devoted to its exposition much study and vast erudition: "If the preceding summary of the principal thoughts of the book is in the main correct, we must admit that the work is exceedingly rich in its content, that it is constructed according to a plan, and that this plan is carried out to the smallest detail. In greatness of conception, and in the power with which a mass of material is subordinated to great ideas, no writing in either Testament dealing with a historical theme is to be compared with Matthew. In this respect the present writer would be at a loss to find its equal also in the other literature of antiquity" (ii. 556).

## CHAPTER XI.

ST MARK.

IF St Matthew's Gospel has left the most numerous traces of its existence and influence in the earliest Christian literature, that of St Mark has left the fewest. This Gospel, now recognised as possessing strongly marked characteristics of its own, and generally acknowledged to be the earliest of the Four, was held in early Church history of least account among them. Even although it was considered to be, in a certain sense, the Gospel of the foremost of the Twelve Apostles, the impression which it made upon the early Church was comparatively insignificant. This is clear from the place which it occupies in many of the ancient manuscripts, notably in those which represent the Western type of text, where it is placed last in order. The textual peculiarities connected with the last twelve verses of St Mark have suggested to scholars that there was a time considerably later than the time of

its composition when this Gospel existed in no more than one copy, which shows that it had not been largely copied and circulated.

It is not difficult to explain the comparative paucity of references in early Christian writings. Our Second Gospel was not directly the work of an Apostle, but of one who was only a follower of Apostles. Its contents, as a study of the Synoptic problem has shown, were already almost wholly incorporated in the Gospels of St Matthew and St Luke. The sections of St Mark which have no parallel in the other two Synoptics are less than a twentieth of the whole Gospel, although throughout his Gospel the Evangelist excels the others in the minute and lifelike representation of facts. It may have been prejudiced by the fact, for which Irenæus<sup>1</sup> is our authority, that some early Gnostics used it in the interest of their view which separated Jesus from the Christ, declaring Christ to be incapable of suffering and Jesus to be the sufferer. It was, moreover, the shortest of the Four, and the literary characteristics which have made it so precious to scholars of modern days, and the tokens that it is really the earliest of them all, were not discerned by the great Biblical critics of the third and fourth centuries. We can understand their attitude from the remarks of Augustine

<sup>1</sup> *Adversus Hæreses*, iii. 11. 10.

in his ‘*De Consensu Evangelistarum*’: <sup>1</sup> “ He has nothing in his Gospel which he shares with John alone. He has very little that is peculiar to himself. He has still less in common with Luke alone. But he has very much in common with Matthew, often expressed too in just so many, and indeed the very same, words. In these instances he sometimes agrees with Matthew alone and sometimes with the other Gospels when they run parallel with Matthew.” But as long as the view prevailed that St Mark was simply, as Augustine called him, the *pedissequus et breviator* of St Matthew, its position could not but be subordinate and its influence less widely marked. Harnack <sup>2</sup> has said that but for its admission to the Canon it would have perished, and we see how near it actually came to such a fate. “ By its inclusion in the Canon we are to-day,” says Professor Burkitt, <sup>3</sup> “ in possession of a document in warp and woof far more primitive than the Churches which adopted it. The fine instinct which reserved a place for the Gospel of Mark among the books of the New Testament shows the Catholic Church to have been wiser than her own writers, wiser than the heretics, wiser, finally, than most Biblical critics from St Augustine to Ferdinand Christian Baur. It is only in the last

<sup>1</sup> *De Cons.*, i. 2.

<sup>3</sup> *Gospel History*, p. 261.

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 127.

half century that scholars have come to recognise the pre-eminent historical value of the Gospel which once survived only in a single tattered copy."

That St Mark wrote his Gospel under the influence of St Peter is one of the best attested traditions of early Christian antiquity, and the internal characteristics of the Gospel support the tradition. Of the Four Gospels, "the second," says Origen,<sup>1</sup> "is by Mark, who composed it according to the instructions of Peter." Clement of Alexandria, in his account of the origin of the Gospels, says: "As regards Mark, they said this was the plan: Peter having preached the Word publicly in Rome, and having spoken forth the Gospel by the Spirit, many of those who were then in Rome requested Mark, as one who had attended Him for long and remembered what had been said, to commit to writing what had been spoken; and that having composed his Gospel he committed it to them at their request. This becoming known to Peter, he neither forbade it nor encouraged it."<sup>2</sup> The testimony of Tertullian<sup>3</sup> has already been quoted. "Of the Apostles, therefore, John and Matthew first instil faith into us; whilst of Apostolic men, Luke and Mark renew it afterwards. . . . That which

<sup>1</sup> Euseb. H. E., VI. 25.

<sup>2</sup> Euseb. H. E., VI. 14.

<sup>3</sup> Adversus Marcionem, iv. 2. 5. See above, p. 51.

Mark published may be affirmed to be Peter's, whose interpreter Mark was. For even Luke's form of the Gospel men usually ascribe to Paul." "Mark, the interpreter and follower of Peter," say Irenæus,<sup>1</sup> "thus commences his Gospel narrative: The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." Although the critical instinct of those great Fathers may have sometimes been at fault, they may be accepted as accurate reporters of primitive tradition, in which capacity they are of the highest service to us.

We do not require to quote Irenæus in detail in support of the Second Gospel after having recorded his declaration as to the acceptance and authority of Four, and only Four, Gospels, of which without a doubt our St Mark was one. Although it is not quoted in Irenæus by any means so often as the other Gospels, the quotations show that it is the Canonical Gospel which is before the writer. Irenæus vouches for the commencement in the language of our St Mark, and he is a witness also to the last twelve verses. These are lacking in the Sinaitic and Vatican Manuscripts and in Mrs Lewis's Syriac, are found in a shorter form in some manuscripts and versions, and are either omitted or inserted with notes of doubt by most modern editors of the New Testament. The words of Irenæus are: "Also, towards the

<sup>1</sup> *Adversus Hæreses*, iii. 10. 6.

conclusion of his Gospel, Mark says: So then after the Lord Jesus had spoken unto them, He was received up into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God; confirming what had been spoken by the prophet: The Lord said to my Lord, Sit Thou on my right hand, until I make Thy foes Thy footstool." The use of St Mark's ending, as it has come down to us, by the larger number, though not the greater weight, of authorities, and, among others, especially by a writer of such wide knowledge as Irenæus, without any question and with no suspicion of its genuineness, is a point in its favour not easily overcome. There are indications<sup>1</sup> in Justin Martyr, the Shepherd of Hermas, Barnabas, and even Clement of Rome, of possible acquaintance with the ordinary ending, which corroborate Irenæus. The verses have been found in an Armenian manuscript of the Gospels written in 986 A.D., with the rubric attached "Of the Presbyter Ariston," and the inference has been drawn that Ariston, possibly Ariston, the friend of Papias and "a disciple of the Lord," was the author, who added them to remedy the abrupt ending of St Mark xvi. 8, and bring the Gospel to a proper conclusion.<sup>2</sup> There is no question of the

<sup>1</sup> See Dr Chas. Taylor, 'Hermas and the Four Gospels,' p. 57, and 'Expositor,' 1893, p. 77 ff.

<sup>2</sup> F. C. Conybeare, 'Expositor,' 1893, p. 240 ff.

antiquity of the verses. It has even been suggested by the late Dr Salmon<sup>1</sup> that if they are not the first conclusion written by St Mark, they may be a second written later.

As we have already seen,<sup>2</sup> the MURATORIAN FRAGMENTIST may safely be inferred to be speaking of St Mark when in the now mutilated opening of the Fragment we read, “aliquibus tamen interfuit et ita posuit,”—“but at some he was present, and so set down what he had heard.”

That JUSTIN MARTYR was acquainted with St Mark has been shown in our discussion of his ‘Memoirs,’ and we have just seen that he may have been acquainted with the traditional ending. In a significant passage<sup>3</sup> he calls the ‘Memoirs,’ from which he gives a quotation, Peter’s: “The mention of the fact that Christ changed the name of Peter, one of the Apostles, and that the event has been written down in his (Peter’s) Memoirs (*ἐν τοῖς ἀπομνημονεύμασιν αὐτοῦ*), together with His having changed the name of two other brothers, sons of Zebedee, to Boanerges, which is, sons of thunder (Mark iii. 16, 17), tended to signify that He was the same through whom the surname Israel was given to Jacob and Joshua to Hoshea.” The expression “his Memoirs”

<sup>1</sup> Introduction, p. 151. Cf. ‘Human Element in the Gospels,’ pp. 530, 531.

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 82.

<sup>3</sup> Dial., c. 106.

here might be interpreted as Memoirs of Christ, but such a subjective interpretation is quite out of accord with the invariable usage of Justin, who calls his authorities Memoirs of the Apostles—that is, Memoirs composed by the Apostles or others. Another allusion of Justin to St Mark's narrative has an interest of its own. Describing, for the benefit of Trypho the Jew, the baptism of Jesus, he tells how He was reputed to be the son of Joseph the carpenter, and a carpenter Himself. "For," says Justin,<sup>1</sup> "He worked at the trade of a carpenter, making ploughs and yokes, thereby teaching the emblems of righteousness and exemplifying an active life." From St Matthew we learn that He was accounted the carpenter's son; it is St Mark alone who records the question, "Is not this the carpenter?" (vi. 3). Celsus seized upon this, calling Jesus a carpenter to trade (*τεκτονικὴν τέχνην*), and framing from it one of his proofs of the discreditable origin of Christianity. Although Justin does not allude to the Second Gospel with the frequency with which he alludes to the First and the Third, he does this sufficiently often to make it clear that it was one of the 'Memoirs' which were his authorities for the Life and Teaching of Christ, and the sacred books of the first Christians in their worship.

<sup>1</sup> Dial., c. 88.

It is PAPIAS OF HIERAPOLIS who is again the earliest writer to bring explicit testimony to St Mark's authorship of the Second Gospel. The testimony which he records in his 'Expositions,' and which has been preserved by Eusebius, is represented as coming from the lips of the Presbyter John. This personage, about whom there has been such an amount of speculation, we believe to be none other than the Apostle John himself. That John the Apostle should bear testimony to St Mark's Gospel is rendered easy of credit by the words of Eusebius (iii. 24. 7): "When Mark and Luke had already published their Gospels, they say that John, who had employed all his time in proclaiming the Gospel orally, finally proceeded to write for the following reason: the three Gospels already mentioned having come into the hands of all, *and into his own too*, they say that he accepted them and bore witness to their truthfulness." Testimony from such a quarter to the origin and character of one of the Synoptic Gospels must be of unique value, and it is necessary to examine with the greatest care the extract of Papias which is the foundation of this view. It will be convenient to place in direct sequence the statement of Papias and the comments of Eusebius containing the sole references in early Christian literature to the Presbyter John, and then the statement attributed to the Presbyter regarding

St Mark. It is the earlier statement which supplies the references to the Presbyter which we interpret as pointing to the Apostle John, the son of Zebedee.

“But Papias himself, in the preface to his discourses,” says Eusebius,<sup>1</sup> “by no means declares that he was himself a hearer and eyewitness of the holy Apostles, but he shows by the words which he uses that he received the doctrines of the faith from those who were their friends. He says: ‘But I shall not hesitate also to set down for you, along with my interpretations (*ἐρμηνείας*), whatsoever things I learned carefully and remembered carefully in time past from the elders, guaranteeing their truth. For, unlike most people, I did not take pleasure in those who have much to say (*τοῖς τὰ πολλὰ λέγοντιν*), but in those who teach what is true; nor in those who relate the precepts of others (*τὰς ἀλλοτρίας ἐντολάς*), but in those who relate such as have been given by the Lord to faith and are derived from the Truth itself. But if ever any one came in my way who had been a close follower of the elders (*παρηκολουθηκώς τις τοῖς πρεσβυτέροις*), I was wont to put questions (*ἀνέκρινον*) regarding the words of the elders—what Andrew or what Peter said, or what Philip or what Thomas or James, or what John or Matthew, or any other [one] of the disciples of the Lord said (*εἰπεν*), as well as regarding the things which Aristion and the Presbyter John, the disciple of the Lord, have to say (*ἃ τε Ἀριστίων καὶ ὁ πρεσβύτερος Ἰωάννης . . . λέγοντιν*). For I did not think that what was to be

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<sup>1</sup> H. E., III. 39. 2.

obtained from books would profit me so much as that which came from a living and abiding voice.' It is worth while observing here that he counts the name of John twice, in the first case classing him with Peter and James and Matthew and the other Apostles, plainly meaning the Evangelist; in the other case, mentioning John again after an interval, and ranking him outside the number of the Apostles, putting Aristion before him, and distinctly calling him Presbyter, the inference being that they are right who say there were two persons in Asia bearing the same name, and that there were two tombs in Ephesus, both of which even to the present day are called John's. It is necessary to pay attention to this, for it is probable that it was the second, if one does not care to admit that it was the first, who saw the Revelation which is by name attributed to John. And Papias, of whom we are now speaking, confesses that he received the words of the Apostles from those who followed them, but says that he himself had been a hearer of Aristion and the Presbyter John. At least he mentions them frequently by name, and gives their traditions in his writings. . . .

Papias gives also<sup>1</sup> in his own work other accounts of the words of the Lord on the authority of Aristion mentioned above, and traditions as handed down by the Presbyter John, to which we refer those who are fond of learning. But now we must add to the words of his which we have already quoted a tradition which has been circulated concerning Mark, who wrote the Gospel, as follows: 'This also the Presbyter used to say (ἔλεγε)—Mark having become the inter-

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<sup>1</sup> III. 39. 14, 15.

preter of Peter, wrote down accurately, though not indeed in order, whatsoever he remembered of the things said or done by Christ ( $\tauὰ ὑπὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἡ λεχθέντα ἢ πραχθέντα$ ). For he neither heard the Lord nor followed Him as a disciple, but afterwards, as I said, he followed Peter, who was wont to adapt his instructions to the requirements of his hearers, though not with any intention of giving a consecutive record of the Lord's discourses, so that Mark made no mistake in thus writing down some things as he remembered them; for he made it his one care to omit nothing of the things which he heard, and to set down nothing in them falsely.'"

We have given the two extracts in their context, so that the important statements of Papias, with the scarcely less important comments of Eusebius, may be in the judgment of the reader. It is not to be wondered at that on the right hand and on the left, by scholars of conservative views and by the very advanced critics, emendations of the text have been proposed, but these have been rendered futile by the absolute unanimity of the manuscript authorities of Eusebius.<sup>1</sup> It is from the words of Papias as they stand that we are to interpret his references to the Presbyter John.

i. Papias intimates, in the very first words quoted by Eusebius, that he had himself been a learner from the elders, and had used the materials he had received from them to strengthen or illus-

<sup>1</sup> Funk, *Patres Apostolici*, p. 350 ff.

trate his interpretations of the Gospel narrative. But he was not content with what he had learned from them directly; if any one had come in his way who had been in days gone by a close companion of those elders, he was in the habit of questioning him to ascertain the words which those elders spoke and set them down in his collections. But who were those elders from whom he was himself a learner, and from whom and from whose companions he obtained words of theirs which he treasured beyond the written narratives put in circulation by others? It can scarcely be doubted that they were the men of the first generation after Christ. In all three places where "the elders" (*οἱ πρεσβύτεροι*) occurs it means "the men of an earlier generation." Irenæus frequently has occasion to use the term when speaking of his authorities, and to him Ignatius, Polycarp, and Papias were "elders." To Papias "the elders" were the men of the generation between Christ and his own day, and he enumerates them here: Andrew, Peter, Philip, Thomas, James, John, Matthew, and even Aristion, all of them described as disciples, and, with the exception of the last, known to us to be disciples—that is, personal followers of the Lord. The Elder John, mentioned along with Aristion, and ranked with him as a disciple of the Lord, if we are to give to the title (*ὁ πρεσ-*

(*βύτερος*) the meaning which it has throughout the extract, is a man of that generation, a personal disciple of Jesus, like those honoured Apostles and teachers who had, when Papias was making his collections, already passed away.

2. The question at once arises, Can this Elder or Presbyter John, who is mentioned along with Aristion, be the same who has already been mentioned along with Andrew and Peter and Matthew, Apostles of the Lord, John the Apostle, the son of Zebedee? It seems to militate against this view that he is only called, as Aristion is, "a disciple," and not "an Apostle," of the Lord. It is to be noticed, however, that the others—Andrew, Peter, and the rest—are not called by Papias "Apostles," but only "disciples" of the Lord. And when Irenæus<sup>1</sup> mentions John he designates him also "the disciple of the Lord," although without question the John of Irenæus is the Apostle John, the son of Zebedee.<sup>2</sup> Papias does not call even Andrew and Peter "Apostles," because their significance for him had nothing to do with their Apostolic office. He was in search of trustworthy traditions concerning Jesus to incorporate with his expositions of the Gospel narratives. Aristion, who was not one of the Apostles, was just as important a

<sup>1</sup> *Adversus Hæreses*, ii. 22. 5; iii. 3. 4.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, iii. 1. 1; ii. 22. 5.

witness as the Apostle Thomas, or indeed more so, since Papias had had no opportunity to cross-examine Thomas as he had Aristion. He thinks, therefore, of no distinction between those who were Apostles and those who were not, but designates those who had seen and heard and followed Jesus "disciples of the Lord" (*μαθηταὶ τοῦ κυρίου*), or elders (*πρεσβύτεροι*), according as he connects them with Jesus, or with himself and the generation to which he belonged.<sup>1</sup> There is no objection whatever to interpreting the designation as belonging to the Apostle John on the ground that he is called only a "disciple of the Lord."

3. There still remains the crucial question why John should be mentioned among the elders and ranked with Apostles early in the statement of Papias, and farther on should be spoken of as the Elder John, as if he were another of the same name and of a later generation. Did Papias really have in his mind two Johns, or does he speak of the one John whom alone primitive Christian antiquity knows, in two different relations? The latter alternative is suggested by the grammatical construction of the words of Papias. We have an indirect question referring to past time (*τί εἰπεν*), and a co-ordinate

<sup>1</sup> Funk, *Patres Apostolici*, p. 352 n.; Zahn, *Einleitung*, ii. 437 (Eng. trans.)

relative clause containing a verb in present time (*ἄ τε λέγουσιν*). Papias tells us that he asked those who had learned from the Apostles of the Lord for utterances of theirs illustrative of the Gospel narratives, and particularly of the Lord's discourses. He mentions Andrew and Peter and Matthew, who had not survived to a later day, and asked what they had said (*εἰπον*), while the informants (*παρηκολουθηκώς τις*) were still in a position to learn from them. These informants might have lived in Palestine for a length of time, and had opportunities long before Papias met them in Asia to hear many Apostles and other disciples of Jesus. In the case of Aristion and of John, who evidently outlived the rest of their generation, he asked, for the purposes of his collection, at a time when they were yet alive, when others as well as himself had opportunities of learning from them what they had to say (*ἄ τε λέγουσιν*). The Apostle John belonged to both groups of the disciples of Jesus, whose words Papias desired to ascertain from their own disciples. That the expression "The Elder" was applicable to him we know. He called himself by that name in addressing the readers of his Second and Third Epistles, using it as if to reciprocate the affectionate veneration in which he was held, both as a spiritual father and an Apostle of Christ, in his

closing years at Ephesus. We hold, therefore, that the passage of Papias, which at first sight seems to have in view two Johns, really speaks of one only, in the two different relations which we have described.<sup>1</sup>

4. It is the comments of Eusebius which have given any substance that there is to the separate personality of the Presbyter John. He by no means exhibits the lucidity and consistency which usually mark his narratives and criticisms in his treatment of this extract of Papias. He really introduces the extract to show that Irenæus<sup>2</sup> was wrong in calling Papias a hearer of John the Apostle, and he says that Papias, in the extract given above, by no means declares himself a hearer and eyewitness of the holy Apostles. In carrying out this contention he seems to contradict himself. For he refuses to allow that the elders, from whom Papias says he learned, were Apostles, and yet a few sentences later he speaks of "the words of the elders" as being "the words of the Apostles," which Papias received from their disciples. "He suppresses the obvious fact that Papias spoke first of such traditions as he received from the elders directly (or from the Apostles, as

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Leimbach, Herzog, Art. "Papias," xiii. 645; Zahn, Einleit., ii. 453 (Eng. trans.)

<sup>2</sup> Adversus Hæreses, v. 33. 4.

Eusebius puts it), before saying that he also inquired concerning the words of the elders (Apostles), in case he fell in with others who, like him, had been their disciples.”<sup>1</sup>

It is the reference to the Apocalypse which perhaps gives us the clue to the procedure of Eusebius in connection with the extract from Papias. Eusebius did not care for the Book of Revelation, which he placed among the spurious books, although he had to admit that it was largely received in the Church.<sup>2</sup> He disliked it because it spoke of the millennial reign of Christ, and he had a poor opinion of Papias also because he held millenarian views. He did not care to attribute the Apocalypse to so honoured an Apostle as John, and here, in the Elder John, the teacher of the millenarian Papias, seemed to be a possible author of the Apocalypse. Dionysius of Alexandria had already noted the difference in style between the Fourth Gospel and the Apocalypse, and had expressed the view that if there had been two Johns at Ephesus, even as there were two monuments each bearing the name of John, a solution of the literary difficulty would be found in assigning the Gospel to the one and the Apocalypse to the other. Dionysius, however, did not get beyond the reach of conjecture: if he knew the words of

<sup>1</sup> Zahn, *ubi supra.*

<sup>2</sup> H. E., III. 25.

Papias, he did not interpret them as witnessing to two Johns, for he knew only of John the Apostle.<sup>1</sup> Eusebius is more venturesome, and assuming, on the strength of this extract of Papias, that there was a second John at Ephesus, he improves upon the position of Dionysius and gives his friend a choice in the one or the other of an author of the Apocalypse.<sup>2</sup>

5. The unanimous tradition of the Church of the first three centuries knows of only one person bearing the name of John who during the last decades of the first century was in any way distinguished in the Churches of Asia Minor—John, the Apostle of the Lord, the son of Zebedee, the teacher of Polycarp and of Papias. So far as we can gather, Eusebius, though he mentions the critical views of Dionysius and says Papias refers by name frequently to Aristion and the Elder John, has no tradition on the point to guide him. Throughout his history, except in the chapter dealing with Papias, the only John of Ephesus whom he knows, and he refers to him often, is John the Apostle. He ascribes to him without question the Fourth Gospel and the

<sup>1</sup> H. E., VII. 24, 25.

<sup>2</sup> "Perhaps no conjecture presented by an ancient writer has been so widely adopted in modern times. A conjecture it still remains, for no fresh light has been thrown on the enigmatic figure of John the Elder."—Swete, *Apocalypse*, p. clxxii.

First Epistle. "Nevertheless," he says,<sup>1</sup> "of all the disciples of the Lord, only Matthew and John have left us written memorials, and they, tradition says, were led to write under the pressure of necessity. . . . But of the writings of John, not only his Gospel, but also the former of his Epistles, has been accepted without dispute both now and in ancient times." He has only, so far as we can gather, the passage of Papias, which he has preserved to us, to go upon, and so his Elder John is, in the words of the late Dr Salmon,<sup>2</sup> "a doubtful interpretation of an ambiguous word in an isolated extract from a lost book." Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus (180-190), recalling the great lights of the early Church in Asia now departed, mentions one John, but not two. Irenæus knows the five books of 'Expositions' of Papias and quotes from them,<sup>3</sup> but he never mentions such a personage as the Presbyter, and does not consider it necessary to put his readers upon their guard against confusing between him and the Apostle. Dionysius, as we have seen—though the fact of another John having lived in Ephesus would have suited his conjecture as to

<sup>1</sup> H. E., III. 24. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Human Element in the Gospels, p. 29, referring, however, to the Logia in Papias.

<sup>3</sup> Adversus Hæreses, v. 33. 4.

the authorship of Revelation—knows of no such person.

The silence of Christian antiquity is remarkable, if there ever was such a person. It is dangerous, of course, to argue from silence, and a single unequivocal and explicit statement by a veracious witness must outweigh the silence of any number of authorities. The testimony of Papias, commented upon by Eusebius, cannot be called such a statement, and it can be naturally and reasonably interpreted without supposing that he mentions two different persons at all. The resuscitation of the conjecture of Eusebius in the interest of a criticism adverse to the Apostolic authorship of the Fourth Gospel has led to a variety of theories and speculations which can only be termed fantastic and extravagant. Of these we shall have to speak when we come to consider the separate testimonies to the Fourth Gospel. There are scholars, on the other hand, like the late Bishops Lightfoot and Westcott, Professor Charteris, Professor Sanday, Professor Stanton, Professor Swete, Principal Drummond,<sup>1</sup> and others who think a separate personality, the

<sup>1</sup> In his ‘Character and Authorship of the Fourth Gospel’ Dr Drummond devotes a whole chapter to the subject of “Papias and the Presbyter John,” and makes out a very strong case for the view which he supports.

Elder John, sufficiently vouched for by the fragment of Papias, while they attribute both the Gospel and the Apocalypse to John the Apostle. The Elder is to them, however, a figure totally devoid of personal characteristics,—“without father, without mother, without descent,”—and his appearance on the stage of the Apostolic history, on their view, is without influence and without notice in any other ecclesiastical record. The view that John the Apostle and the Elder John are one and the same was elaborately worked out by the late Professor Milligan<sup>1</sup> forty years ago, and is maintained by Zahn, Funk, Leimbach, the late Dr Schaff, and the late Dr Salmon of Dublin, and others. It is the view which, I venture to think, has the greatest amount of evidence in its favour.

We come now to the testimony of Papias to St Mark's Gospel, which is of unique interest as giving us the judgment of the Apostle John. “Mark having become the interpreter of Peter, wrote down accurately, though not indeed in order, all that he remembered of the things said or done by Christ.” These are the words of the Elder, as I believe, the Apostle John; the remainder is comment by Papias, as appears from the interjected expression, “As I said.” And

<sup>1</sup> *Journal of Sacred Literature*, 1867.

both text and comment describe the circumstances under which St Mark's Gospel was composed. The scope thus assigned to the work of St Mark accords well with the Gospel which bears his name; for it combines in due proportions things said and things done by Christ, although in St Mark it is mighty works rather than long discourses which bulk most in the eye of the reader. Whatever may be said by critics like Schmiedel and Wellhausen<sup>1</sup> as to the transformation of the original tradition regarding Christ before it came even to St Mark, the view which Bishop Lightfoot so strenuously combated in his 'Essays on Supernatural Religion' has now ceased to be held, that the Second Gospel was recast between Papias and Irenæus, and that the Gospel which Papias knew was a different Mark altogether. Nor is there any doubt in the mind of Papias as to the identity of St Mark's book, of which he had heard his teacher speak, with that used in the Church of Asia Minor at the time when he wrote. It seems as if complaint had been made in the time of Papias of the manner of St Mark's presentation of the Lord's words and works. Apparently exception was taken to its want of completeness and to its deviation from strict chronological order. The dependence of

<sup>1</sup> *Einleitung*, p. 53.

the Gospel upon the Apostle Peter explains both. St Mark in large measure reproduced St Peter's discourses, which, as we learn from Papias and can well understand, had in view the practical requirements of the audiences whom he addressed, and must have varied from time to time. He added no inventions of his own to these discourses, but was scrupulously careful to omit nothing which he had heard and still remembered, and to adhere strictly to the facts. As regards the lack of order, it cannot be said that there is no observance of chronological order, for this Gospel, in its own way, is as orderly as the others. But order is to be estimated by the conception of the speaker; and when it is the Apostle John who speaks, we can understand him to mean that St Mark's Gospel diverged from the order of his oral instructions, which later became stereotyped in the Fourth Gospel. This is undoubtedly the case. And even St Luke, who incorporates in his Gospel about three-fourths of the Second Gospel, treats his source as if he recognised the peculiarities noted by the Elder.<sup>1</sup>

Whether the word "interpreter" (*ἐρμηνευτής*), applied to St Mark in relation to St Peter, is used literally or figuratively—that is, in the sense of imparting the teaching of a master

<sup>1</sup> Harnack, *Luke the Physician*, p. 158 n.

— has been largely debated.<sup>1</sup> The latter seems to be most probable. St Mark wrote not as an Apostle, but as an apostolic man, and was dependent on the Apostle Peter for the main body of his materials. In thus giving to the world in his Gospel the teachings of St Peter, St Mark was his “interpreter.”

The Second Gospel is thus, by the testimony presented by Papias, traced up to the closing years of the first century. At that time, when Papias was gathering collections of tradition and anecdote, which he recorded in his ‘Expositions,’ a book written by a follower of St Peter, and narrating the things said or done by Christ, was circulating in Asia, and had attracted the attention of Christians there. It had even come under the notice of the Beloved Disciple at Ephesus, whose judgment regarding it has been handed down to us in the work of Papias.

When we go back beyond Papias to the APOSTOLIC FATHERS, proofs of the early circulation and use of the Second Gospel are still forthcoming. If they be somewhat slender and uncertain, they are nevertheless enough to show the continuity of the tradition. HERMAS, as we

<sup>1</sup> See Swete, St Mark, p. xx; Zahn, Einleitung, ii. 454-456 (Eng. trans.)

have seen, knew of a Gospel quaternion, and Professor Zahn<sup>1</sup> has maintained that a predominant use of St Mark is observable in the ‘Shepherd,’ this being in his judgment the favourite Gospel in the Roman Church for the time. “Those, therefore,” runs the Shepherd,<sup>2</sup> “who are involved in many and various worldly affairs do not join themselves to the servants of God, but go astray, being suffocated by their business occupations; but rich men hardly join themselves to the servants of God, fearing the demands made by them. Such persons, therefore, shall with difficulty enter into the kingdom of God (Mark x. 22, 23). For as it is difficult for naked feet to walk over thorns, so also it is difficult for such to enter the kingdom of God.” POLYCARP,<sup>3</sup> who was a hearer of John the Apostle, has at least one reference which looks like an allusion to St Mark (xiv. 38, cf. Matt. xxvi. 41), although such an expression—“the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak”—might have been handed on by oral tradition. IGNATIUS<sup>4</sup> has probable echoes of St Mark when he speaks of the “unquenchable fire” (ix. 43), and when he says, “Neither shall the perfect faith, Jesus

<sup>1</sup> Der Hirt des Hermas, pp. 456-464; but see GK. ii. 919.

<sup>2</sup> Hermas, Sim., ix. 20. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Polyc. ad Phil., vii. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Ign. Eph., xvi. 2; Smyr., x. 2.

Christ, be ashamed of you" (viii. 38). When we come to CLEMENT OF ROME there are no references to St Mark that we can be sure of, but there are sayings quoted in which St Mark and St Matthew are agreed.

When we turn to the earliest HERETICAL WRITERS we find that St Mark was in use among them. The use of the Second Gospel by Cerinthus is asserted by Irenæus. The CLEMENTINE HOMILIES<sup>1</sup> have echoes of it and one highly probable reference. HERACLEON, whose commentary is quoted in Clement of Alexandria, has the reference to St Mark (viii. 38) already mentioned as cited by Ignatius. MARCION was probably acquainted with our Gospel. In the recently discovered GOSPEL OF PETER an interesting proof of acquaintance with the Gospel according to Mark has been surmised by Professor Burkitt.<sup>2</sup> In the two oldest manuscripts, as has been already noticed, the last twelve verses of St Mark are wanting, the verses now concluding the Gospel having been added later, whether by St Mark himself or by another hand. Professor Burkitt points out that the general agreement of St Mark and St Matthew all through the narrative of the Passion makes it antecedently probable that the

<sup>1</sup> See Canonicity, p. lxvi. ff.

<sup>2</sup> Transmission of the Gospel History, p. 332 ff.

genuine Gospel of St Mark as it left the author's hands would follow the lines of the conclusion of St Matthew. We should expect it to tell how the eleven disciples went away into Galilee and saw the Lord on a mountain there, when He would give them His last commands. Now this is the line which is followed in the Gospel of Peter, and there are coincidences which appear to support the suggestion of Professor Burkitt. The whole subject, however, alike in its textual aspects and in its historical, is so complicated that this suggestion cannot be taken for more than a surmise.

It was after the departure ( $\tauὴν ἔξοδον$ ) of St Peter and St Paul, says Irenæus, that St Mark committed to writing what had been communicated concerning Jesus in the preaching of the foremost of the Apostles. That his Gospel was first given to the Church of Rome is the testimony of antiquity, and is borne out by the references, slight as they are, in the Shepherd and the Epistle of Clement. Its connection with St Peter is to be gathered from the Gospel itself. "From the Gospel itself," says Jülicher, "we derive but one impression concerning its author: that he was a born Jew, familiar with the circle of the original Apostles, and specially interested in Peter, but also a much-travelled personage, rejoicing in the fact that the Gospel was to be preached

unto all nations.”<sup>1</sup> The public ministry of Jesus as recorded in the Gospel begins with the calling of St Peter. Other events of the early ministry have St Peter for their centre. The house and the boat of which Jesus availed Himself were Simon’s. Both in the account of the scene at Cæsarea-Philippi, and in the narrative of the denial, in which St Peter figures so largely, we can see that he is St Mark’s source. There was one incident which lived in St Peter’s memory to the end of his days, and was cherished with peculiar fondness, the Transfiguration, upon which he dwells in his Second Epistle with special emphasis and tenderness. St Mark records it with touches which are peculiar to him, and when we consider the fulness of detail with which he has recorded that event we can easily trace it to the foremost Apostle. The vividness, circumstantiality, and realism which pervade St Mark’s Gospel bear witness to the influence of St Peter, and fully bear out the tradition of his connection with its record.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Introduction to the New Testament, p. 321.

<sup>2</sup> “St Mark’s Gospel is most readily accounted for as the product of two factors: the narrative of a Galilean eyewitness, and the interpretation of that narrative in a Greek form for Roman readers. Tradition points to St Peter, the Galilean fisherman, as the source of the narrative, and to St Mark, his interpreter at Rome, as the writer of the book. Everything in the scope and style of the work is in harmony with this view of its origin.”—The Dean of Westminster, ‘The Study of the Gospels,’ p. 47.

St Mark, which is so meagrely attested by Patristic witnesses in comparison with St Matthew, has an authentication more weighty than these. It has been incidentally noticed that St Mark's narrative is largely reproduced, with slight alterations and with occasional divergences in the order and setting of his materials, in St Matthew and St Luke. These Evangelists thus became primary witnesses for St Mark as a reliable and trustworthy Gospel history. With St Luke, the companion and fellow-labourer of St Paul, on the one hand, and the Presbyter John, whom we take to be the Apostle of the Lord, on the other, as witnesses for his Gospel, St Mark is an Evangelist whose credit is unassailable.

## CHAPTER XII.

ST LUKE.—I.

ALTHOUGH the attestation of the Third Gospel in the Early Fathers is not so widespread as that of the First, nor so early as that of the Second, there never was a question raised in early Christian antiquity as to its genuineness and credibility. From Irenæus, who is the first explicitly to name St Luke as the author, and the Muratorian Canon, in which the Gospel is given the third place, St Luke has been acknowledged as the writer. Eusebius, who had command of all the references to the New Testament books in the Christian literature before his day, and who includes the Third Gospel among his “acknowledged” books, says of its author:<sup>1</sup> “Luke, who was of Antiochian parentage and a physician by profession, and who was specially intimate with St Paul, and in no ordinary way associated with the rest of the Apostles, has left us in two in-

<sup>1</sup> H. E., III. 4. 7.

spired books proofs of that spiritual healing art which he learned from them. One of the books is the Gospel which he testifies that he wrote, as those who were from the beginning eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered unto him, all of whom, he says, he followed accurately from the first. The other book is the Acts of the Apostles, which he composed not from the accounts of others, but from what he had seen himself. And they say that Paul meant to refer to Luke's Gospel whenever, as if speaking of some Gospel of his own, he used the words, 'according to my Gospel.' " In another passage, where he deals with the order of the Gospels, Eusebius<sup>1</sup> has a notable reference to St Luke's preface: "Luke, in the beginning of his Gospel, states himself the reasons which led him to write his narrative. He states that since many others had more rashly undertaken to compose a narrative of the events of which he had acquired perfect knowledge, he himself feeling the necessity of freeing us from their uncertain opinions, delivered in his own Gospel an accurate account of those events in regard to which he had learned the full truth, being aided by his intimacy and his stay with Paul, and by his association with the rest of the Apostles." Eusebius here reads into St Luke's opening

<sup>1</sup> H. E., III. 24. 15.

words strictures upon the motives and methods of his predecessors in the Gospel collections which they put together,—strictures neither expressed nor implied by the Evangelist. The view that St Luke was “aided by his intimacy and his stay with St Paul and by his association with the rest of the Apostles,” is a stroke of the higher criticism on the part of Eusebius, and, though perfectly correct, is not warranted by anything which the Evangelist says in the preface to his Gospel.

We have already seen the views of Irenæus on the subject of a collection of Gospels. His references to the Four Gospels are copious, explicit, and unhesitating, as if there was no doubt as to their authorship and never had been. In his argument against Marcion he contends that it was the same God who made heaven and earth, and whom the prophets declared, that was set forth in the Gospel, and he adduces proofs of his contention from our Four Gospels, attributing them to the authors whom we recognise. From St Luke, whom he<sup>1</sup> designates “the follower and disciple of Apostles” (*sectator et discipulus apostolorum*), and notably of St Paul (*Λουκᾶς ὁ ἀκόλουθος Παύλου*), he quotes largely, referring to the annunciation and birth of the Forerunner, the annunciation to Mary, the appearance of the

<sup>1</sup> *Adversus Hæreses*, iii. 10, iii. 1.

angel to the shepherds, the multitude of the heavenly host, the presentation in the Temple, and other incidents peculiar to St Luke's Gospel. For the refutation of the opinion that St Paul was the only Apostle who had knowledge of the truth, he appeals to the intimacy of St Luke, who was his constant companion and fellow-traveller, showing that if St Paul had known mysteries unrevealed to the other Apostles, St Luke could not have been ignorant of them. "That this Luke was inseparable from Paul," he says,<sup>1</sup> "and his fellow-labourer in the Gospel, he himself clearly evinces, not as a matter of boasting, but as bound to do so by the truth itself. For he says that when Barnabas and John, who was called Mark, had parted company from Paul and sailed to Cyprus, 'we came to Troas,' and when Paul beheld in a dream a man of Macedonia saying, 'Come over into Macedonia, Paul, and help us,' 'immediately,' he says, 'we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, understanding that the Lord had called us to preach the Gospel unto them.' . . . But surely if Luke, who always preached in company with Paul, and is called by him 'his beloved,' and with him performed the work of an evangelist, and was entrusted to hand down to us a Gospel, learned nothing different from him, as has been pointed out from his words,

<sup>1</sup> iii. 14. 1, 2.

how can these men, who were never attached to Paul, boast that they have learned hidden and unspeakable mysteries?"

Irenæus proceeds to show that St Paul and the Apostles kept back nothing of all they had learned from the Lord. "Thus also does Luke," he continues, "without respect of persons, deliver to us what he had learned from them, as he has himself testified, saying, 'Even as they delivered them unto us who were eye-witnesses and ministers of the Word from the beginning.' Now if any man will set Luke aside, as one who did not know the truth, he will by so acting manifestly reject the Gospel of which he claims to be a disciple. For through him we have become acquainted with very many and important parts of the Gospel; for instance, the generation of John, the history of Zacharias, the coming of the angel to Mary, the exclamation of Elisabeth, the descent of the angels to the shepherds, the words spoken by them, the testimony of Simeon and Anna with regard to Christ, and that at twelve years of age He was left behind at Jerusalem; also the baptism of John, the number of the Lord's years when He was baptized, and that this occurred in the fifteenth year of Tiberius Cæsar. And in His office of teacher this is what He has said to the rich: 'Woe unto you that are rich, for ye have received

your consolation,' and 'Woe unto you that are full, for ye shall hunger, and ye who laugh now, for ye shall weep,' and 'Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you, for so did your fathers to the false prophets.'" And so Irenæus goes through a tolerably complete summary of the contents of the Third Gospel. "There are also," he says, "many other particulars to be found mentioned by Luke alone, which are made use of both by Marcion and Valentinus. And besides all these he records what Christ said to His disciples in the way after the resurrection, and how they recognised Him in the breaking of bread." The uncritical character of the early Fathers is a favourite topic with certain writers, but here Irenæus shows himself a critic of no mean order. He has no hesitation or doubt as to St Luke being the author both of the Third Gospel and of the Acts of the Apostles, and he has in his mind's eye the very elements which go to determine the questions raised by modern criticism—the unity of authorship, the We-sections, and the Pauline cast of the two writings.

We pass on now to the testimony of Marcion himself to the Gospel according to St Luke. It is unfortunate that no work of Marcion or any of his followers survives, but we can collect his views from Hippolytus, Irenæus, Tertullian, Epiphanius, and others who set themselves to refute his

arguments. It was in a series of propositions called ‘Antitheses’ that Marcion set forth the superiority of the New Testament to the Old, the God of the Christians to the God of the Jews, the Gospel to the Law, and the Apostles to the ancient Prophets. We have seen in the quotation made above how Irenæus exposes the inconsistency of those who accept the Gospels as genuine and yet refuse to acknowledge the doctrines they set forth. Marcion is not guilty of this inconsistency to the same extent as others, for he accepts this one Gospel only. Marcion of Pontus came to Rome about 135 A.D., and established himself there as one of the most dangerous heretics. It gives us some conception of the detestation in which he was held that Polycarp, when Marcion once met him in Rome and said, “Recognisest thou us?” replied to the heretic, “I recognise the first-born of Satan.”<sup>1</sup> He founded a church of his own, as we have already seen, and the Marcionites subsisted as a sect down into the fifth century quite separate from the Catholic Church. He was, we may say, the father of all those who in our day regard the historical element in the Gospels as of no account and their ethical and spiritual teaching as everything. He held that the God of the Old Testament was quite different from the God of

<sup>1</sup> H. E., IV. 14. 7.

the New Testament, revealed to us by Jesus, and he could not believe that the Gospel came from the God of the Old Testament at all. He denied accordingly that Christianity had any root in the Old Testament, but regarded it as something absolutely new upon the earth,—with the result of making Christ and Christianity incomprehensible and unreal. Having cut Christianity away entirely from its Old Testament connection, and having rejected the Old Testament itself so decisively, he required some basis on which to rear the doctrinal fabric connected with his name. From the Judaism which he hated he took the conception of a canon of Scripture, and over against the body of Scripture accepted by the Jews he set up a new body of Scripture, comprising a mutilated Gospel of St Luke and ten Epistles of St Paul, with excisions to suit his scheme of doctrine. “Wherefore also,” says Irenæus,<sup>1</sup> “Marcion and his followers have taken themselves to mutilating the Scriptures, not acknowledging some books at all; and curtailing the Gospel according to Luke and the Epistles of Paul, they assert that these are alone authentic, which they have themselves thus shortened.” The procedure of the heretic is described elsewhere:<sup>2</sup> “He mutilates the Gospel

<sup>1</sup> *Adversus Hæreses*, iii. 14. 12; cf. iii. 11. 7, 9.

<sup>2</sup> *Adversus Hæreses*, i. 27. 2.

which is according to Luke, removing all that is written respecting the generation of the Lord, and setting aside a great deal of the teaching of the Lord, in which the Lord is recorded as most clearly confessing that the Maker of this universe is His Father. . . . In like manner, too, he dismembered the Epistles of St Paul, removing all that is said by the Apostle regarding that God Who made the world, to the effect that He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and also those passages from the prophetic writings which the Apostle quotes in order to teach us that they announced beforehand the coming of the Lord."

It is Tertullian who gives the most complete account of Marcion's treatment of St Luke's Gospel. In his treatise against Marcion, especially in the Fourth Book, he proceeds to expose the system of the Pontic heretic on the basis of his acceptance of this Gospel alone. He goes through the Gospel chapter by chapter, letting us see what Marcion rejected and what he received, and how he manipulated it to serve his own ends. "We lay it down as our first position," says Tertullian,<sup>1</sup> "that the evangelical testament has Apostles for its authors, to whom was assigned by the Lord Himself the office of publishing the Gospel. Since, however, there are

<sup>1</sup> *Adversus Marcionem*, iv. 2.

apostolic men also associated in the authorship, they are not alone, but with Apostles and after Apostles, because the preaching of disciples might be open to the suspicion of an affectation of glory if there did not accompany it the authority of the masters, which means that of Christ; for it was that which made the Apostles their masters. . . . Never mind if there does occur some variation in the order of the narratives, provided that there be agreement in the essential matter of the faith, in which there is disagreement with Marcion. Marcion, on the other hand, you must know, ascribes no author to his Gospel, as if it could not be allowed him to affix a title to that from which it was no crime, in his eyes, to subvert the very body. . . . Now of the authors whom we possess, Marcion seems to have singled out Luke for his mutilating process. Luke, however, was not an Apostle, but only an apostolic man; not a master but a disciple—at least as far behind him as the Apostle whom he followed—and that, no doubt, was St Paul—was behind the others; so that had Marcion even published his Gospel in the name of St Paul himself, the single authority of the document, destitute of all support from preceding authorities, would not be a sufficient basis for our faith.” Tertullian then proceeds with what is at once a commentary on St Luke’s Gospel and a vigorous refutation of

Marcion from the heretic's own presuppositions. Marcion's Gospel<sup>1</sup> begins with the words, "In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar God came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught on the Sabbath Day" (Luke iii. 1, with iv. 31 taken in). Marcion follows this up with the case of the man with the unclean spirit in the synagogue (iv. 32-39) and the healing of all who were brought to Jesus afflicted with various diseases at sunset of the same day (iv. 40-44), mutilating the narrative, however, so that it cannot be shown how far he had the Evangelist's words before him. It is noticeable that the first two chapters of St Luke are omitted entirely. It would have been altogether contrary to Marcion's system to admit that Christ came in the flesh and that He had anything to do with the fathers of the Old Testament dispensation. So he could take no notice of John the Baptist's ministry, and the Temptation of Christ lay equally outside the scope of his principles. He omits the parable of the Prodigal Son, because it represents the Supreme God as the Father of both Jews and Gentiles; he alters a well-known saying of Jesus (xvi. 17), "It is easier

<sup>1</sup> See the references very fully given, with explanatory notes woven in, 'Canonicity,' pp. 400-408; and for an elaborate restoration of Marcion's Bible—both Gospel and Epistles—see Zahn, GK. ii. 455-529. See also Roensch, *Das neue Testament Tertullian's*.

for heaven and earth to pass away than for one tittle of the law to fail" to "It is easier . . . for one tittle of my words to fail," where he refuses to acknowledge any reference to the Law. In his exposition of the Sermon on the Mount, Tertullian<sup>1</sup> quotes the golden rule as it is given in St Luke: "And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise" (Luke vi. 31). And it is just possible that it is with his eye upon Marcion that he adds the negative form of it, saying, "In this command is no doubt implied its counterpart: And as ye would *not* that men should do to you, so should ye also *not* do to them likewise." In another passage (xviii. 19) he makes an addition to the text of the Gospel to serve his purpose: "Call me not good; one is good, God the Father,"—where "the Father" is added to distinguish the Supreme God from the demiurge, who, though God, was not Father. The testimony of Tertullian is to the same effect as that of Irenæus, and we might pursue the inquiry with the same result through Hippolytus and Epiphanius, the conclusion being that those learned Fathers all held the Gospel adopted by Marcion to be none other, in spite of excisions and interpolations, than our Gospel according to St Luke.

This verdict of early Christian antiquity was

<sup>1</sup> *Adversus Marcionem*, iv. 16.

challenged by the rationalistic criticism of Germany, and it is interesting now to recall that Ritschl began his literary career with a work intended to prove that Marcion's Gospel was the work of a Pauline Christian of the last decades of the first century, which a less genuine Paulinist worked up, about 140-145 A.D., into a gospel of his own by interpolations especially from St Matthew, and which is now known as our Gospel according to St Luke. Ritschl was then a follower of Baur, and Baur gave the work his approval. By-and-by Hilgenfeld and Volkmar, from within the Tübingen camp, attacked the new hypothesis, and with such success that Baur withdrew his approval. Ritschl himself in a short time recanted and withdrew from the Tübingen camp. The view thus represented has not been left without champions in more recent times. But they have not been able to rehabilitate the theory in the estimation of the learned world. In his early 'Gospels in the Second Century' Professor Sanday has a brilliant and convincing chapter on Marcion's Gospel. He showed that out of fifty-three sections peculiar to St Luke, from the point where the thread of the narrative is taken up by Marcion, all but eight are to be found also in Marcion's Gospel. "Curious and intricate," says Dr Sanday,<sup>1</sup> "as

<sup>1</sup> *Gospels in Second Century*, p. 214.

is the mosaic work of the Third Gospel, all the intricacies of the pattern are reproduced in the Gospel of Marcion. Where St Luke makes an insertion in the ground-stock of the narrative, Marcion makes an insertion also; where St Luke omits part of the narrative, Marcion does the same.” In fact, he seems to have treated it exactly as he is known to have treated the Epistles of St Paul, cutting out portions and omitting whole passages where the teaching of the only Apostle he acknowledged ran counter to his own.

The case for the traditional view has been made still stronger by the elaborate studies which Professor Zahn has made on the text of Marcion. There are many charges of falsification and corruption of the text imputed to Marcion by Tertullian and others of which he has to be acquitted. Tertullian is unnecessarily severe, for example, when he imputes a corrupt motive to Marcion and his followers in calling the canonical Epistle to the Ephesians the Epistle to the Laodiceans. Marcion had good reason so to call it. In the Epistle to the Colossians (iv. 16), St Paul speaks of an Epistle to Laodicea, which is now generally believed to be the circular letter called “To the Ephesians.” The words destining it to Ephesus (*ἐν Εφέσῳ*, Eph. i. 1) were unknown to Marcion, as they

were to Origen, having been omitted in what is now believed to have been a circular letter. This illustration suggests that the falsifications and alterations which Tertullian and others impute to Marcion in his treatment of St Luke may be really nothing more than various readings. Professor Zahn has proved this. Where Tertullian and Marcion are entirely agreed as to the Greek text of any passage of the Gospel under reference, and have it, so far as we can gather, word for word the same, we may be tolerably certain of the precise reading of Marcion in quoting St Luke. It is well known that there are two types of text in the Third Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles, both (if we accept the theory of the late Professor Blass) from St Luke himself, the one representing the original draft and the other the fair copy of the author. The manuscripts copied from the one or the other respectively reproduce their characteristics, and the Western authorities—whether manuscripts like Codex Bezae, or versions like the Old Latin, or Fathers like Irenæus—exhibit these peculiar readings most prominently. Marcion's text, where we can be sure of it, belongs to this type. And although Tertullian's use of the same type of text should have saved him from falling into the mistake of accusing Marcion of falsification when he deviated from the Catholic text of his

day, he may have been misled by trusting to his memory, and so have cast the blame upon the heretic.

We have, therefore, not only the testimony of Marcion to St Luke's Gospel, but evidence derived from the number and character of the textual variations that it had been circulated and copied for a long time before. There is good reason to believe that he used a text of St Luke assimilated to that of St Matthew and St Mark, so that he not only knew these Gospels but lived at a time when the three had already circulated so long together that copyists had begun to be influenced in the transcription of one by the habitual knowledge of the others. There are also indications that he had acquaintance with our Fourth Gospel.

"Only in very insignificant measure," says Zahn,<sup>1</sup> "has Marcion, according to the witnesses available, used for his own the three Gospels directly or indirectly ascribed to Apostles, so that the judgment of his opponents that he gave to his Church a mutilated Luke appears on this side to be fully warranted. But he has nevertheless used these Gospels so far that the answer to the question obtained on another line, What Gospels has he found up to that time used in public worship? appears now to

<sup>1</sup> GK. i. 680.

be fully ascertained. They are the same of which we have already heard from Justin, that they were the staple of Christian edification in the ordinary services of the Catholic Church, and which Tatian, two decades later, worked up into his *Diatessaron*. Only there are to be found in Marcion none of those small apocryphal additions which Justin and Tatian have introduced into our Gospels. For some few harmless enlargements which he took over from an ecclesiastical text of the Gospels can scarcely be compared with additions drawn from a written or oral source circulating alongside of our Gospels."

On the question of the Canon of Scripture Marcion may have anticipated the Church as a whole. While the Church combined Old Testament books and New Testament books in a unity as equally sacred writings, and suitable for use in Divine worship, Marcion rejected the Old Testament as a source of revelation with which Christianity had nothing to do. While the Church did not yet possess a fixed and generally accepted canon of New Testament Scripture, but exhibited differences in different provinces, Marcion gave to his adherents a fixed canon. Whilst the Catholic collections embraced at least thirteen Pauline Epistles, and exhibited essentially the same text as we read, Marcion had only ten,

and these in a text considerably shorter. Instead of the Fourfold Gospel of Catholic Christianity, Marcion gave to his adherents a single Gospel, which appeared so like to none of the canonical Gospels as to that of St Luke. Even in Marcion's Gospel, as we have seen, there is no uncanonical matter, and no appearance of it in any of his writings, so that he is a witness not only to St Luke but also to the fact that no more than our Four were then accepted within the Roman Church, for which he is a witness.

## CHAPTER XIII.

ST LUKE.—II.

THE testimony of Marcion carries us back considerably beyond his day, for the condition of the text shows that his Gospel, our Third Gospel, had been for a length of time in circulation. It is quite in accordance with this that we find undoubted references to it in JUSTIN MARTYR, the references, as already indicated, showing the influence of Matthew and Mark, perhaps because of an early harmony or because the ' Memoirs ' ('*Απομνημονεύματα*) are themselves a harmony. There are references to St Luke in Justin's writings, more or less clearly marked, numbering over sixty. In his vindication of the Christians to the Emperor we find him quoting the words of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount:<sup>1</sup> "As to being patient of evil, and helpful to all, and free from anger, this is what He (*ὁ Χριστός*) said: To him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the

<sup>1</sup> Apol., i. 16.

other; and him that taketh from thee the vest or the cloak, hinder not" (*Luke vi. 29*). St Luke is most in evidence, but St Matthew (*v. 39, 40*) seems also recalled in the mixed character of the passage. A similar mixture is found in another reference,<sup>1</sup> where St Luke (*xii. 4, xviii. 27*) and St Matthew (*x. 28*) are combined: "We know that our Lord Jesus Christ spoke as follows: The things which are impossible with men are possible with God. And, Fear ye not them that kill you and after that have nothing that they can do, He said, but fear ye Him Who is able after death to cast both soul and body into hell." In Justin's account of the Virgin Birth, St Luke (*i. 35*) and St Matthew (*i. 21*) are found in combination. There are passages, however, referred to which imply St Luke alone: "For in the Memoirs, which I say were composed by His Apostles and those that followed them, it is written,<sup>2</sup> sweat poured down from Him like clots of blood as He prayed and said, Let this cup pass, if it be possible" (*Luke xxii. 44*). "And when Herod, who succeeded Archelaus, had taken the power entrusted to him, to whom also, by way of doing him courtesy, Pilate sent Jesus bound, God foreseeing that this would happen, had spoken as follows" (*Luke xxiii. 7, 8*). A good illustration of a quotation made from memory, and not in the very words

<sup>1</sup> *Apol.*, i. 19.

<sup>2</sup> *Dial.*, c. 103.

of the Gospel, is the following :<sup>1</sup> “ And again in other words He said, I give to you power to tread upon serpents and scorpions and adders, and upon all the power of the enemy ” (Luke x. 19). Another quotation,<sup>2</sup> while by no means exact, too closely resembles the Third Gospel to be referred to any other source : “ As also our Lord said, They shall neither marry nor be given in marriage, but shall be equal to the angels, being the children of the God of the resurrection ” (Luke xx. 35, 36). But no one can read Justin’s First Apology or the Dialogue without finding quotations or references to discourses of Jesus or incidents in His ministry, as well as to particulars associated with His Birth and with His Passion, Trial, Crucifixion, and Resurrection, as these are recorded by the Third Evangelist.

Another witness contemporary with Justin and Marcion whose testimony may be noticed is the apocryphal GOSPEL OF PETER, which is placed by Harnack and Sanday as early as the first quarter of the second century, but, as Zahn contends, may not be earlier than 140-150 A.D. It presupposes our Canonical Gospels, and there are a number of expressions which exhibit the influence of St Luke. It is only a fragment which has been preserved, containing the narrative of the Passion and the Resurrection. It is

<sup>1</sup> Dial., c. 76.<sup>2</sup> Dial., c. 81.

accordingly only the concluding chapters of St Luke that it attests, but in attesting these it sufficiently attests the whole Gospel. The Gospel of Peter mentions, like Justin, the sending of Jesus by Pilate to Herod; calls the two malefactors *κακούργου*; recalls the multitudes present at the last scenes of the Crucifixion beating their breasts; the two men in the sepulchre in shining vesture; the bringing of spices by the women for a memorial while it was yet early morning—all of which particulars belong to the Evangelic narrative, and are peculiar to St Luke. There are other coincidences of such an artless and natural character that they are inexplicable if we deny to the Docetic author of the fragment a knowledge of the Gospel according to Luke.<sup>1</sup>

Reference might be made to CELSUS, who used St Matthew as his chief authority, but who has

<sup>1</sup> About the same date some scholars would find testimony in the 'Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs.' The work seems to have been known to Irenæus, Hippolytus, and Tertullian. Origen expressly refers to it in his Homily on Joshua. Its value has been called in question by Schürer ('Geschichte des Volkes Israels,'<sup>2</sup> iii. 252-262), who holds it to be a Jewish work interpolated in a Christian interest. Plummer ('St Luke,' p. lxxviii) has drawn up a table of verbal coincidences on the assumption that the book is from the middle of the second century of our era, and their testimony is confirmed by coincidences of thought pointing to the universality of the Christian redemption and the comprehensiveness of the Kingdom. Professor Charles, however ('The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs'), holds that the work was written in Hebrew before 100 B.C., and represents pre-Christian Judaism at its highest and best. He

references to incidents and precepts clearly traceable to St Luke. "He seems to allude to the sending of an angel to Mary; he scoffs at her royal descent, and at the carrying back of the genealogy of Christ to the first man. Either from St Luke or St John he has learned that Jesus, after His resurrection, showed His pierced hands to the disciples. He has read in St Luke the saying of Jesus about the ravens. The form in which he quotes the precept of Jesus with reference to not returning evil for evil suggests St Luke rather than St Matthew."<sup>1</sup>

In the apocryphal PROTEVANGELIUM JACOBI and the PSEUDO-MATTHÆUS, which are Infancy Narratives, there are references to St Luke's Nativity history. These works are both comparatively early in the second century, and presuppose the Gospel history. They give a cave, just as Justin does, for the place of the birth of Jesus.

Of the early heretics, none has a more eminent place than BASILIDES, who used the New Testament books and quoted them as Scripture. There are those who are of opinion

admits slight Christian interpolations, but believes that our Lord knew it and used it in the Sermon on the Mount, and that St Paul also was acquainted with it. In this estimate Jewish scholars agree with him, but Schürer's view appears to strike the mean between Charles and Plummer.

<sup>1</sup> Patrick, 'Apology of Origen in reply to Celsus,' pp. 92, 93.

that St Luke was his Gospel. Eusebius<sup>1</sup> tells us of his ‘Exegetica,’ a work in twenty-four books, which is not a Gospel (although Origen speaks of a Gospel of Basilides) but an exposition of the Gospels. There is in this work an undoubted reference to the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus. According to Hippolytus,<sup>2</sup> he gave a mystical explanation of the Incarnation, quoting St Luke (i. 35). We may hold, therefore, that St Luke’s Gospel was known and acknowledged by Basilides.

When we come to the APOSTOLIC FATHERS, we find still traces of the Third Gospel, although these are neither numerous nor explicit. We have already seen that HERMAS knew the Four Gospels, but the possible traces of St Luke’s Gospel by itself are very slight. It is probable that IGNATIUS had St Luke’s Gospel in his mind (xxiii. 7-9) when he referred to the crucifixion as having taken place in the time of Pontius Pilate and Herod the Tetrarch;<sup>3</sup> and when he quotes the Risen Lord as saying to St Peter and those that were with him, “Take ye and feel me, and see that I am not a bodiless spirit” (*δαιμόνιον*) (Luke xxiv. 39). These two last words are found, however, in the Gospel according to the Hebrews, and it might be held that Ignatius, though he has no other uncanonical

<sup>1</sup> H. E., IV. 7. 6, 7.    <sup>2</sup> Ref. Hær., vii. 26.    <sup>3</sup> Smyr., i. 2.

allusion, may have obtained it from that source. In POLYCARP'S Epistle to the Philippians, which is saturated with the Synoptic tradition, there are passages which seem to exhibit a combination of St Matthew and St Luke. One of these passages is quoted also by Clement of Rome with an almost identical formula of quotation: "Especially remembering the words of the Lord Jesus which He spake teaching meekness and long-suffering. For thus He spake: Show mercy, that ye may receive mercy; forgive, that ye may be forgiven; as ye do, so shall it be done unto you; as ye give, so shall it be given to you; as ye judge, so shall ye be judged; as ye lend, so shall it be lent to you; with what measure ye mete, it shall be meted unto you again."<sup>1</sup> Clement of Alexandria also gives the passage with a few unimportant variations,<sup>2</sup> and the Didascalia and Macarius give portions more or less exactly. The Oxford Committee, who have sought out the traces of the New Testament books in the Apostolic Fathers,<sup>3</sup> have subjected this reference to a careful analysis, and are of opinion that there is no one documentary source common to all these writers. "We incline to think," they say, "that we have in Clemens

<sup>1</sup> Clem., xiii. 1. Compare Polycarp ad Phil., ii.

<sup>2</sup> Strom., ii. 18. 91.

<sup>3</sup> New Testament in Apostolic Fathers, pp. 58-61.

Romanus a citation from some written or unwritten form of ‘Catechesis’ as to our Lord’s teaching, current in the Roman Church, perhaps a local form which may go back to a time before our Gospels existed.” While BARNABAS may be regarded as a witness on behalf of St Matthew’s Gospel, it is doubtful whether he had any acquaintance with St Luke. The Synoptic tradition was no doubt before him, but it is difficult to determine how far he was acquainted with our Third Gospel, since nothing peculiar to St Luke occurs in his citations. The search for traces of St Luke in the DIDACHE is not much more successful. In the opening chapter we have a mosaic of quotations from the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. v. 44, 46, 47; Luke vi. 29, 30), a perusal of which begets the feeling that the writer has been using St Luke as well as St Matthew. In another passage describing “the true prophet,” the ‘Didache’ speaks of him as worthy of his meat, which is the exact expression of St Matthew and 1 Timothy v. 18, whereas St Luke has for meat ( $\tauροφῆς$ ), hire ( $μισθοῦ$ ) (Luke x. 7 = Matt. x. 10). In the eschatological chapter concluding the ‘Didache’ there is another of those mixed references made up of St Matthew and St Luke, where St Luke has the best of it: “Watch ye for your life. Let not your lamps be put out, and let not

your loins be loosed, but be ye ready. For ye know not the hour in which our Lord cometh.”<sup>1</sup> This is more distinctively St Luke’s language (Luke xii. 35): he uses *λύχνοι* (lamps) and *ὅσφυες* (loins) exactly as the author of the ‘Didache.’ The first and the last sentences are more suggestive of St Matthew (Matt. xxiv. 44). Upon the whole we may decide for the knowledge of St Luke, although St Matthew is the favourite source. Here, again, there may be the influence of oral instruction in Christian morality given to catechumens, which in Dr Sanday’s judgment accounts for combinations such as these.

We have thus traced the Third Gospel by means of references in the early Fathers more or less clear, up into the first century. It has to be borne in mind that down to the time of Irenæus it is never quoted or referred to as St Luke’s. It is in this respect not so much different from the other Gospels. The First and the Second Gospels are called by their authors’ names by Papias, but the Fourth Gospel is not quoted as St John’s till Theophilus of Antioch quotes it by name about 180 A.D. There is no indication that Irenæus was led by internal evidence to ascribe the Third Gospel to St Luke. The name of the Evangelist does not occur either in his Gospel or in the Acts of

<sup>1</sup> Did., c. xvi. 1.

the Apostles. Irenæus was no doubt guided, as the Church was in those days, by primitive tradition, which in the case of St Luke, as of the others, never varied. Marcion, though he mutilated the Gospel and did not call it by St Luke's name, seems nevertheless to have known it as his. The fact that he left out the reference to "the beloved physician" in the greeting of St Paul to the Colossians (iv. 10) may point to such knowledge. Tatian, though regarded as a heretic, acknowledged its authority, and included it in the *Diatessaron*. Justin ascribes the 'Memoirs' to the Apostles of Jesus and those who followed them (*παρακολουθησάντων*, Luke i. 3) when he is referring to incidents narrated by St Luke alone, being apparently aware of the Lucan authorship of the Gospel, though he does not ascribe it to him by name. Those who collected the Gospels into a quartette, as we have reason to believe, shortly after the appearance of the Fourth Gospel, no doubt gave the Third the title which it afterwards bore without challenge, According to Luke (*κατὰ Λουκᾶν*). And they did so because the prologue must have from the beginning pointed to the author. "Anonymous compilations," says Professor Harnack, "in the course of tradition easily acquire some determining name, and it is easy to imagine an

author writing under a pseudonym. But in the case of a writing determined by a prologue and a dedication, we require some very definite reasons for a substitution of names, especially when this is supposed to occur only one generation after the date of publication."<sup>1</sup> The tradition, so unvarying and so constant from the first, and becoming vocal and explicit by the time of Irenæus, is to be explained only by the fact that St Luke was the writer. The book was ascribed to him just as the 'Annals' are ascribed to Tacitus and 'Romeo and Juliet' to Shakespeare.

In the case of our Gospel, the internal evidence is so far from contradicting the ascription of it to St Luke by primitive tradition that it actually establishes it beyond dispute. Not only so, but the internal evidence here is of so marked and special a character that it furnishes us with a test of the intrinsic value of Christian tradition in its bearing upon the composition of the Gospels.

The tradition of Luke's authorship is fully confirmed and vindicated by the evidence of the Gospel itself. It is part and parcel of that tradition that the Luke whose name is associated with this two-volume Christian history, the Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles, is the Luke

<sup>1</sup> Lucas der Arzt, p. 2.

mentioned in St Paul's Epistles (Col. iv. 10; Phil. 24; 2 Tim. iv. 11), and from that history can be shown to be a Greek by birth, a physician, a follower of St Paul, and a fellow-labourer of the great Apostle of the Gentiles. It is hardly necessary any longer to support the statement that the Third Gospel and the Acts are by the same hand. Dr Hobart of Dublin, in his work on the 'Medical Language of St Luke,' Sir John Hawkins in his 'Horæ Synopticæ,' and Dr Plummer in his 'Commentary on St Luke,' have adduced evidence of the common authorship which is irresistible, and have brought it home to St Luke by unassailable proofs. Firstly, the language, style, and literary arrangement are identical. Characteristic words and expressions are found in both. The writer of both books has skill in writing Greek, and the Septuagint was his Bible more than St Paul's. Secondly, assuming that the Gospel and the Acts are by one author, we learn from the We-sections of the Acts that he was a companion in travel and fellow-labourer of St Paul. It is not enough to say that these sections are interpolations, or portions of a diary of travel, belonging to some other person. The literary characteristics, the miraculous incidents, and other special phenomena, show them to be of exactly the same texture as the rest of the work. Thirdly, the crowning

proof of identity which fixes the authorship unmistakably upon Luke, the Beloved Physician, is the indication of medical interest and the employment of medical phraseology which run right through the Acts, and are found in the Acts and the Gospel equally. Professor Harnack has braved the risk of being called an apologist, and in his 'Luke the Physician' has adopted, and to some extent strengthened, the proofs furnished by the writers named above of the Lucan authorship of both works. We are, then, fully warranted in affirming that the evidence of the books themselves entirely coincides with the verdict of early Church history regarding the authorship, and there are few facts of literary history better established than this, that St Luke, the Beloved Physician, the companion and fellow-labourer of St Paul, is the author of our Third Gospel and the Acts.

Through the witness of the early Fathers, and the phenomena of the twofold history itself, we are brought right up within the Apostolic age to the composition of the Third Gospel somewhere between 60 and 80 A.D. We have a history eminently worthy of credit, whether we place it earlier or later within these limits. When, moreover, we reflect that St Luke avails himself largely of St Mark's materials, and that he draws from the same fountain-head as

St Matthew for other material, we see how fundamental is his position as a witness to the truth of the Gospel history. He not only enables us to vindicate the general truth of the literary traditions of the early Church regarding its sacred writings, but himself in his Gospel and in the Acts of the Apostles guarantees the historical character of the earliest Christian records.

## CHAPTER XIV.

ST JOHN.—I.

SINCE rationalistic criticism marshalled its forces early in the nineteenth century for the assault upon the sacred books of our Christian faith, St John's Gospel has had to bear the brunt of the fiercest attacks. No naturalistic theory of Christianity could possibly succeed so long as the Fourth Gospel, with its representation of the Word made flesh, held its ground as the work of the disciple who stood closest to the Divine Master. We have noticed<sup>1</sup> the ascription of the Fourth Gospel to Cerinthus by the Alogi in the second century,—a view which found but scant acceptance at the time, and was ignored by writers like Irenæus and Clement of Alexandria, not to speak of Eusebius afterwards. Irenæus<sup>2</sup> even supposed that St John wrote his Gospel to combat the Docetic teaching of Cerinthus regarding the Person of Christ.

<sup>1</sup> P. 6.<sup>2</sup> *Adversus Hæreses*, iii. II. 1.

From the second century to the end of the eighteenth the Gospel was accepted without challenge as the work of St John the Apostle. Its authenticity was first questioned by English Deism, in the person of Edward Evanson, in 1792, and again by a German scholar, Breschneider, in 1820. Then came Strauss with his ‘Life of Jesus’ in 1835, and Baur in 1844 with a still more formidable assault, both rejecting the Johannine authorship and the historical character of the Gospel. According to Baur, the Gospel was written after the middle of the second century in Asia Minor, or perhaps in Alexandria. For a time Baur’s extreme views seemed to have triumphed, and the genuineness of the Fourth Gospel ceased to be a tenet of scientific criticism.

It was impossible for Christian faith to acquiesce in such a disastrous conclusion. Believing scholarship was roused to do battle for that which had been received as truth for seventeen hundred years. The New Testament books and the Christian literature of the first and second centuries were investigated afresh, and discoveries of long-lost works of early Christian literature contributed opportunely to the thoroughness of the examination. The result of the critical labours of the last half-century and more has been to bring the Fourth Gospel again within the Apostolic age.

"Generally between 95 A.D. and 115 A.D.," says Dr Moffatt,<sup>1</sup> "nearer the latter year in all probability than the former, the Gospel may be conjectured to have been written. Sanday, after Godet, limits the date to 83-89 A.D., but it is much safer to take the closing decade of the century as the earliest limit." Even some who deny the genuineness admit the credibility. Wendt<sup>2</sup> asserts that the Fourth Evangelist is a post-Apostolic writer who has preserved notes of the Apostle John's recollections, has given them a historical framework suitable to the requirements of the post-Apostolic Church, and has arranged them in a form which secured their acceptance in post-Apostolic Christendom. He by no means classes the Fourth Gospel with works of fiction. He attributes to it a considerable measure of historical worth as a record of the life and discourses of Jesus. Professor Harnack,<sup>3</sup> who ascribes the Fourth Gospel to John the Presbyter, admits that in some way John the Apostle, the son of Zebedee, stands behind the Gospel, and that it cannot have been written later than 110 A.D. Schmiedel,<sup>4</sup> on the other hand, contends that it is not the work of the son of Zebedee, nor of an eyewitness or con-

<sup>1</sup> Historical New Testament, p. 495.

<sup>2</sup> Gospel according to St John, p. 254.

<sup>3</sup> Chronologie, p. 659 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Encyclopædia Biblica, art. "John."

temporary, but of a later writer (probably after 132 A.D.), who was “easily accessible to Alexandrine and Gnostic ideas.” Professor Julius Grill of Tübingen, whose work on the Fourth Gospel<sup>1</sup> is very able and scholarly, declares that the Fourth Gospel comes from the period of Gnostic speculation in the second century, and that the author never intended to be known, and never will be known. There are other negative critics who do not admit the Gospel to be so close to the time of the Apostles, but whose positions are an immense advance upon Baur. We shall see what the earliest Christian literature has to say in opposition to those more negative views, and what it has to say in favour of the traditional view after all that has been written of recent years.

Eusebius, in a chapter<sup>2</sup> on “The order of the Gospels,” says that “of all the disciples of the Lord, only Matthew and John have left us written memorials, and they, tradition says, were led to write only under the pressure of necessity. . . . The three Gospels, . . . having come into the hands of all, and into his own also, they say that he accepted them and bore witness to their truthfulness,<sup>3</sup> but that there was lacking in them an

<sup>1</sup> Untersuchungen über die Entstehung des vierten Evangeliums, p. vi and p. 384.

<sup>2</sup> H. E., III. 24.

<sup>3</sup> Compare what the Presbyter, quoted by Papias, says of Mark, p. 189; also Muratorian Fragment, p. 84.

account of the deeds done by Christ at the beginning of His ministry. . . . One who understands this can no longer think that the Gospels are at variance with one another, inasmuch as the Gospel according to John contains the first acts of Christ, while the others give an account of the latter part of His life. And the genealogy of our Saviour according to the flesh John quite naturally omitted, because it had been already given by Matthew and Luke, and began with the doctrine of His divinity, which had, as it were, been reserved for him, as their superior, by the Divine Spirit." This account of the motive of St John in the composition of his Gospel reminds us of the notable saying of Clement of Alexandria, already quoted:<sup>1</sup> "Last of all, John, perceiving that the external facts ( $\tauὰ σωματικά$ ) had been made plain in the Gospel, being urged by his friends and inspired by the Spirit, composed a spiritual Gospel ( $πνευματικὸν εὐαγγέλιον$ )."

Irenæus, himself of Asia Minor, the disciple of Polycarp, the scholar of St John, expressly calls John the Apostle the author, and does so as if he had never heard of any other view. Theophilus of Antioch, who is credited with a Harmony of the Gospels, and was a commentator of note in the early Church, has left a treatise in three books addressed to Autolycus. He wrote about 180 A.D.,

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 45, 46.

and is the first to name St John as the author of the Fourth Gospel. “Whence the holy Scriptures teach us, and all the inspired writers, of whom John says: ‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God,’ showing that at first God existed alone, and in Him the Word. Then he says, ‘And the Word was God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made’ (John i. 1, 2).”<sup>1</sup> This is the oldest Gospel quotation in which the Evangelist is quoted by name, and Theophilus expressly places him on a level with the inspired writers of the Old and the New Testament.

We have already dealt with the *Diatessaron* of TATIAN and its testimony to the Fourfold Gospel. His ‘Address to the Greeks’ has references which show beyond doubt acquaintance with the Fourth Gospel. “Renouncing the demons,” he says,<sup>2</sup> “follow ye God alone. ‘All things were made by Him, and without Him was not any one thing made’” (John i. 3). This is clearly a quotation from St John, and the form of the quotation (not including  $\delta\gamma\acute{e}yov\epsilon\nu$ , attached to it in the text underlying the Authorised Version) is that of the oldest manuscripts, of Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Irenæus, and Theophilus, and other early writers, both

<sup>1</sup> Ad Autolycum, ii. 22.

<sup>2</sup> Address to Greeks, p. 158 D.

orthodox and heretical. "And this," he says again,<sup>1</sup> "is accordingly what has been said: 'The darkness does not overtake the light' (John i. 5); the light of God is the Word." In another passage of some length<sup>2</sup> expounding the Christian view of the creation, there are phrases and expressions which betray unmistakable familiarity with the prologue of St John's Gospel by the easy and natural manner in which they are woven into the exposition. Outside of the prologue there is at least one reference<sup>3</sup>—"God is a Spirit (John iv. 24), but not even the God without a name is to be bribed with gifts." Tatian's 'Address to the Greeks,' says Professor Stanton,<sup>4</sup> "shows admirably how the substance and purpose of a work by a Christian writer might naturally affect the number and character of the Scriptural quotations in it. This discourse contains clear evidence of the knowledge and use of the Fourth Gospel, but none, or scarcely any, of acquaintance with the other Gospels. Moreover, in regard to the Fourth, it is almost exclusively the language and thoughts of the prologue that we meet with. We have, besides, only the words, 'God is a Spirit.' The explanation is, however, obvious when we notice that, apart from his attacks on Paganism, the themes of which Tatian

<sup>1</sup> *u.s.*, p. 152.<sup>2</sup> *u.s.*, p. 145.<sup>3</sup> *u.s.*, p. 144.<sup>4</sup> *Gospels as Historical Documents*, p. 149.

here treats are the creation of the world and the nature of man. If the work concerning the Christian system, which he promises in the present treatise, had come down to us, we should in all probability have found quite a different class of evangelical quotations and parallels there.” The testimonies now advanced, when taken along with the witness of the Diatessaron, furnish indisputable proof that the Fourth Gospel was already familiarly known and invested with high authority.

We have the CLEMENTINE HOMILIES<sup>1</sup> somewhere about the middle of the second century, and this notable treatise contains evidence of the use of St John’s Gospel, which is now scarcely questioned. It was largely on the ‘Clementine Homilies’ that Baur founded his reconstruction of the history of early Christianity. Here, he said, is primitive Christianity, the Petrine teaching, the genuine doctrine of the first followers of Jesus. This view has been shown to be baseless, but not a little of the interest of the treatise remains. The eminent scholar de Lagarde, who published an edition of the ‘Clementines,’ and who had no theological end to serve, gives in his Prolegomena fifteen instances of quotations from the Fourth Gospel or reference to it. Here is an unmistakable example:<sup>2</sup> “Therefore He Himself being a

<sup>1</sup> See Canonicity, pp. lxiii-lviii; pp. 184, 185; pp. 438-444.

<sup>2</sup> Clem. Hom., iii. 52.

prophet, said, ‘I am the gate of life: he that entereth in by me entereth into life’ (John x. 9); . . . and again, ‘My sheep hear my voice’ (John x. 27).” A reference,<sup>1</sup> which appears also in Justin (*Apol.*, i. 61), has been the subject of much discussion: “For thus the Prophet swore unto us, saying, ‘Verily I say unto you, Except ye be born again of living water, in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven’ (John iii. 5).” It has been contended that both Justin and the Clementine writer quote here from an apocryphal book, but as the quotations of the passage by the two writers differ from one another, that view seems improbable. The quotation is much more likely a free combination of St Matthew (xxviii. 19) with St John (iii. 3-5), a kind of combination which is common when, as may be the case here, the quotations are made from memory. Although some of Lagarde’s references are unimportant, and some of the quotations vary from the language of the Gospel, they served to convince scholars that the Clementine writer was acquainted with our Fourth Gospel. The denial of such references was, however, essential to the theory of Baur, and he and Schwegler and Hilgenfeld maintained it strenuously, regarding the references as too doubtful to be admitted.

<sup>1</sup> Clem. Hom., xi. 26.

But when Dressel published his edition of 'Twenty Homilies of Clement of Rome' in 1853, with the long-lost concluding portions of the work derived from a manuscript he had discovered in the Vatican, denial of the use of St John's Gospel was no longer possible. The evidence available before was supplemented by a direct and striking allusion to the man blind from his birth (John ix. 1). "Wherefore," so runs the reference,<sup>1</sup> "also our Master, inquiring about the man blind from his birth, who recovered his sight through Him, made answer to those who asked whether this man sinned or his parents that he should be born blind: Neither this man sinned nor his parents, but that through him the power of God might be manifested curing sins of ignorance." Not only is the reference direct and detailed, but the very words of the Gospel narrative appear in the quotation (*ἐκ γενετῆς, ἀνέβλεψα*), and the Clementine writer notes the sins of ignorance alluded to in the context. The only weak link in this evidence is the uncertainty as to the date of the Clementines. Stanton<sup>2</sup> thinks the date too uncertain to found any conclusion upon them. Professor Sanday gave the date as somewhere about the middle of the second century, and although certainty is not attainable, the phenomena of quotation, when

<sup>1</sup> Clem. Hom., xix. 22.

<sup>2</sup> Gospels, p. 159, n. 2.

compared with Justin Martyr, tend to support this view.

The GOSPEL OF PETER, already referred to, has what appear to be distinct references to our Fourth Gospel. The following seem to be clear references to the crucifixion and burial as narrated in St John's Gospel (chap. xix.): "They clad Him with purple, and they placed Him on a seat of judgment,<sup>1</sup> saying, Judge righteously, O King of Israel; and one of them brought a crown of thorns and set it upon the head of the Lord" (vv. 2, 13). "And they were scourging Him, and saying, This is the honour wherewith we will honour the Son of God" (v. 1). "And they brought two malefactors and crucified the Lord between them. But He was silent, as if in no wise feeling pain; and when they set up the cross they inscribed upon it the words, This is the King of Israel. And having laid down His garments before them, they divided them and cast lots for them" (vv. 18, 24). "And the Jews being provoked at Him, commanded that His legs should not be broken, in order that He might die in torment" (v. 31). "And Joseph . . . wrapped Him in a linen cloth and brought Him into his own tomb, which was called Joseph's garden" (v. 41). The account of the

<sup>1</sup> It is possible that in John xix. 3 ἐκάθισε, used of Pilate, is transitive. But this is not St John's usage. See Westcott, *ad loc.*

resurrection follows St John's narrative in the twentieth chapter: "And they came there and found the sepulchre opened, and drawing nigh thither they stooped down" (xx. 5). "He is risen and gone" (v. 15). "But we, the twelve disciples of the Lord, wept and grieved, and each of us in grief at what had happened, withdrew to his house. But I, Simon Peter, and Andrew, my brother, took our nets and departed to the sea, and there was with us also Levi, the son of Alphæus, whom the Lord . . ." (xx. 10, xxi. 3).<sup>1</sup> However we may account for the variations from the evangelical narrative and the additional particulars, the narrative undoubtedly presupposes a knowledge of the Fourth Gospel, embodying as it does so many particulars peculiar to it. "We consider it certain," says Rendel Harris, "that our false Peter had a good acquaintance with St John's Gospel." "Of all the discoveries of the last century in the domain of early Christian literature," says Professor Harnack,<sup>2</sup> "this is the most notable, for it is the only relic of any size of genuine, even if already of secondary or tertiary, Gospel literature which has been preserved to us alongside of the Four Gospels." Harnack

<sup>1</sup> The fragment from which these passages are taken can be conveniently consulted in Rendel Harris, 'The Newly Recovered Gospel of Peter,' chap. iv.

<sup>2</sup> Chronologie, p. 625.

was at first in doubt as to the use of St John's Gospel here, but now he is certain that it is referred to, and it is really because of the proved use of St John's Gospel, which he puts not later than 110 A.D., that he does not ascribe to the Gospel of Peter a higher antiquity. Without, however, putting this apocryphal Gospel fragment so early, we have in it by general consent a witness to the use of St John's Gospel about 150 A.D.

The relation of JUSTIN MARTYR to the Fourth Gospel has already been discussed.<sup>1</sup> In Dr Charteris's 'Canonicity' there are nineteen express references to the Fourth Gospel collected from the Apologies and the Dialogue, and sixteen references which cannot be counted as more than echoes. We have already mentioned Justin's reference to Christian baptism. His teaching on the subject may be considered in its bearing upon his acquaintance with the Fourth Gospel. In Justin's exposition of baptism for the instruction of the Roman Emperor, he says:<sup>2</sup> "As many as have been convinced and believe the truth of what is taught and told by us, and promise to endeavour so to live, are taught to pray and to seek from God, with fasting, forgiveness of the sins committed before, while we pray and fast along with them. Then they are led to a place where there is water, and are born again in the

<sup>1</sup> P. 102.

<sup>2</sup> Apol., i. 61.

same manner in which also we ourselves were born again, for they receive the washing with water on the spot in the name of the Father of all and God the Lord, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit. For Christ said, Except ye be born again, ye shall in nowise enter into the kingdom of heaven. But that it is impossible for men who have once been born to enter into the womb of the mothers that bare them, is manifest to all. . . . Now the doctrine with respect to this we learned from the Apostles.” Justin evidently refers to the words of institution in St Matthew (xxviii. 19), and passes on to the spiritual significance of the ordinance, blending St John’s “Except a man be born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (iii. 3) with St Matthew’s “Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall in nowise enter into the kingdom of heaven” (xviii. 3). If it should be held that the baptismal reference is to St Matthew alone, we can still adduce the purely Johannine words: “Nicodemus saith unto Him, How can a man be born again when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?” (John iii. 4). It is impossible to resist the conviction that we have here a reference to St John’s account of the interview of Nicodemus with Jesus recorded in this familiar chapter.

Similarly in his account of the Lord's Supper, Justin has what must be regarded as a reminiscence of our Lord's great discourse in the synagogue at Capernaum (John vi. 52-56), setting forth the spiritual significance of the ordinance. "For it is not common bread nor common drink that we take," says Justin,<sup>1</sup> ". . . but we were taught that the bread and wine were the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh,"—a reference corresponding in particular to the words in St John's Gospel, "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life" (John vi. 52). It is of importance to notice here that Justin adds: "For the Apostles, in the Memoirs composed by them, which are called Gospels, have handed down that so it was commanded to them." Once more, in the Dialogue,<sup>2</sup> we read how Jesus "healed those who from birth and in the flesh were blind and deaf and lame, making one to leap, another to hear, and a third to see by His word." The expression "from birth" (*ἐκ γενετῆς*) is peculiar to St John, who is the only evangelist mentioning the cure of any congenital infirmity, and it points clearly to the Fourth Gospel as the source of Justin's knowledge.

There are clear indications that Justin was acquainted with the narrative of the Passion as

<sup>1</sup> Apol., i. 66.

<sup>2</sup> Dial., c. 69.

it is given in the Fourth Gospel. “For when they had crucified Him they pierced His hands and His feet, fixing the nails into them; and they that crucified Him divided His garments among them, and by casting lots determined what each should take by the throw of the dice” (compare John xx. 25 and Matt. xxvii. 35).<sup>1</sup> One quotation which Justin<sup>2</sup> reproduces regularly in the same form is that in fulfilment of prophecy regarding the piercing of the Saviour’s side—“They shall look on Him whom they pierced” (John xix. 37).

There are several passages in Justin which presuppose acquaintance with the Prologue of the Gospel, and show that his doctrine of the Person of Christ is that of St John. Principal Drummond, who has made the subject a life-long study, examines the subject anew in his very able volume on ‘The Character and Authorship of the Fourth Gospel.’ He finds that the words of the Prologue—“the Word was God”—are paralleled again and again in Justin, only with greater emphasis and fulness. “In this point,” he says,<sup>3</sup> “the Justinian doctrine is not only more copious than the Johannine, but presents

<sup>1</sup> Dial., c. 97. Cf. Apol., i. 35.

<sup>2</sup> Apol., i. 52; Dial., c. 32.

<sup>3</sup> Character and Authorship, p. 114. Dr Drummond’s second chapter, and especially his exposition of Justin’s doctrine of the Person of Christ, is masterly and convincing.

the appearance of a true development, an unfolding of the implicit contents of the brief and pregnant statement of the Gospel. And if it be said that thus far Justin is indebted to Philo, still the incorporation of the Alexandrine theology with Christianity must itself have required time, and its more abundant mixture in the writings of the Apologist than in that of the Evangelist betrays, if not a later date, at least a more advanced post on the march of dogmatic formulation." This doctrine, and the doctrine of the pre-existence of Christ, Justin declares also that he and his fellow-believers "have been taught" (*ἐδιδάχθημεν*), "have understood" (*νενοήκαμεν*) from the Memoirs of His Apostles, "have learned" (*ἔμαθομεν*) from the Memoirs.

There are further Johannine thoughts which frequently make their appearance in Justin—that Christ came forth from the Father, that the Father sent Him, that He fulfilled the Father's will. The keywords of the Fourth Gospel, *μονογενῆς*, *φῶς*, *ζωή*, recur frequently in Justin. Like St John, and no doubt following him, he uses the type of the Brazen Serpent,<sup>1</sup> saying, in the spirit of the Evangelist, "there is salvation to those who fly to Him who sent into the world His crucified Son" (John iii. 14-16).

It is difficult to see how the attestation of St

<sup>1</sup> Dial., c. 91.

John's Gospel by Justin could reasonably be made stronger. No doubt he quotes it less frequently than the Synoptics. But that does not prove that he set it upon a lower level. His treatment of it has been explained as follows: "Rather does he employ Johannine conceptions and lines of thought—as he does also Pauline—almost as one employs a dogmatic writer of similar tendency and position from whom, as one's standard, one has learned to think and to express one's self; whereas Justin cites after the Synoptics, he reflects after St John."<sup>1</sup> A good deal has been made, by opponents of the Johannine authorship, of the fact that while he knows the name of the author of the Apocalypse, and calls him John, he never mentions him as his authority for any fact or doctrine which he sets forth. But neither does he name the Synoptists, whom he quotes so frequently, nor St Paul, though he uses expressions (*πρωτότοκος* and others) peculiar to him, and must have known some, if not all, of his epistles. Even when he is following St Paul in citations from the Old Testament which differ from the Septuagint and are not literally translated from the Hebrew, he never mentions him by name. But though he

<sup>1</sup> Thoma, 'Genesis des Johannes-Evangelium,' p. 824, quoted by Stanton, 'Gospels,' p. 130. Cf. Drummond, 'Character and Authorship,' p. 158 ff.

does not call them by their names, and really has no occasion to do so, there can be no reasonable doubt that the ‘Memoirs’ of Justin are the Gospels of Irenæus, and that Justin knew the Fourth Gospel to be the work of the Apostle John.

Besides the testimony from the ‘Clementine Homilies’ and the ‘Gospel of Peter,’ which cannot be classed with orthodox writings, we have valuable testimony to St John’s Gospel from a GROUP OF HERETICS in the first three-quarters of the second century. Among them is HERACLEON, who was, so far as we know, the earliest commentator on the New Testament. He wrote commentaries, possibly on St Matthew, and certainly on St Luke and St John. None of them have survived, but copious extracts are to be found in the works of Clement of Alexandria and in Origen. His commentary on St John is largely quoted by Origen in his commentary on the Fourth Gospel, and an index of passages of Scripture quoted, or explained, or referred to by Heracleon, shows frequent references to the first, second, fourth, fifth, and eighth chapters of St John. His comments on the story of the woman of Samaria at Jacob’s well are largely quoted by Origen, who gives the quotations with such explicitness that we even have Heracleon’s testimony to various readings. It is not necessary

to elaborate the witness of the extant fragments of Heracleon to St John's Gospel. Of his knowledge and use of it there is no doubt, and we can gather what sacredness and authority he, although a heretic, attributed to it from the fact that he deemed it worthy of a commentary, and bestowed such minute care upon the letter of its text. The only question is, again, as to his date, which is believed to lie between 140-160 A.D. Adopting the later date, we shall allow time for the Gospel to have won the esteem which occasioned a detailed and verbal commentary on it.

Heracleon was the intimate friend (*γνώριμος*) of VALENTINUS, and belonged to the school of that great Gnostic teacher. Clement of Alexandria calls Heracleon the most esteemed of the school of Valentinus.<sup>1</sup> This renowned head of the school accepted the whole New Testament — *integro instrumento*—as Tertullian<sup>2</sup> says, but perverted it by fanciful interpretations to support the theory of emanations, by which he sought to bridge over the gulf between a spiritual Supreme Being and the material world. He was a contemporary of Justin Martyr, and was in Rome during the episcopates of Hyginus, Pius, and Anicetus. The date 140-160 A.D. represents the closing period

<sup>1</sup> Origen, In Joan., ii. 66; Clem. Stromateis, iv. 9.

<sup>2</sup> De Praescriptione Hereticorum, c. 38.

of his activity. We have from Irenæus<sup>1</sup> an account of the treatment of the Prologue of St John's Gospel by Valentinus and his school. "This is what he says: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God; the same was in the beginning with God' (John i. 1, 2). Having first distinguished these three—God, the Beginning, and the Word—he unites them again in order that he may show the projection of the two of them, of the Son and of the Word, and the union of the two to one another and to the Father. . . . 'All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made' (John i. 3), for the Word was the author of form and beginning to all the Æons that came into existence after Him. But 'What was made in Him,' says John, 'is life.' Here again he indicated conjunction; for all things, he said, were made by Him, but *in* Him was life. . . . He styles Him 'A light which shineth in darkness, and was not comprehended by it' (John i. 5), inasmuch as when He imparted form to all those things which had their origin from passion, He was not known by it. He also styles Him Son and Truth and Life and 'the Word made flesh, Whose glory,' he says, 'we beheld, and His glory was that of the Only-begotten, given to Him by the Father, full of grace and

<sup>1</sup> *Adversus Hæreses*, i. 8. 5.

truth' (John i. 14). But what John really says is this: 'And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us; and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.' Accurately therefore does he set forth the first Tetrad, speaking of the Father and Grace, and the Only-begotten and Truth. In this way does John speak of the first Ogdoad and that which is the Mother of all the Æons. For he mentions the Father and Grace, the Only-begotten and Truth, the Word and Life, and Man and the Church." We see here how Irenæus attributes these quotations to John, the son of Zebedee, for he knows no other; and how he takes pains to show the misquotation of the words of the Evangelist by these heretics. Hippolytus, whose great work on the 'Refutation of Heresies' is a storehouse of information on this subject, has references to the use of St John by Valentinus. He represents him<sup>1</sup> as quoting words of Jesus recorded only by St John. "Therefore, he says, says the Saviour, 'All that came before me are thieves and robbers' (John x. 8)." In another place<sup>2</sup> Hippolytus represents him quoting the words of the Fourth Gospel cited by Justin: "This, he says ( $\phi\eta\sigma\iota$ ), is what the Saviour saith ( $\lambda\acute{e}\gamma\epsilon\iota$ ), 'Except a man be born of water and Spirit, he shall not enter into the kingdom of

<sup>1</sup> Ref. Hær., vi. 35.

<sup>2</sup> viii. 10.

heaven, because that which is born of the flesh is flesh' (John iii. 5, 6)." When Baur contends that so far from Valentinus founding upon the Fourth Gospel for his elaborate system of Æons and emanations, the Evangelist has adopted his characteristic key-words from him, we feel that he is putting the cart before the horse. Any such view is quite out of keeping with the whole tone and style of St John's Gospel. The simple use of terms by the Evangelist approves itself as fundamental and original; the distortion by the philosophers and system-builders is clearly a subsequent stage.

BASILIDES is a witness who brings St John's Gospel considerably nearer to the Apostolic age. It is from Hippolytus also that we obtain information regarding this eminent Gnostic teacher. By means of the fresh light thrown upon the history of Gnosticism by the discovery of the 'Refutation of all Heresies' about the middle of last century, and the certain recognition of Hippolytus as the author, we become acquainted with a Gnostic theory not of dualism but of pantheistic monism, not of emanation from the higher to the lower but of evolution from the lower to the higher. The author of this system is Basilides, and we have an exposition of it in Hippolytus. Investigation has shown that in the pages of Hippolytus there is

a faithful representation of the original work. This is important, because when appeal is made to the authority for the doctrine of this Gnostic sect we believe that we have the views and opinions of Basilides himself, and not of his philosophical descendants a generation or two later. Hippolytus<sup>1</sup> states expressly that the Basilidian account of all things “concerning the Saviour” subsequent to the birth of Jesus agreed with that given “in the Gospels.” It was not any particular Gospel, such as that of St Luke,<sup>2</sup> but the Gospels collectively, which were expounded by Basilides. The expression *τὸ εὐαγγέλιον* would not of itself necessarily denote our Four Gospels, although their use by Justin so soon after Basilides’s day, and the fact that St Luke and St John at any rate are commented upon separately, make it probable that our Four Gospels made up the *εὐαγγέλιον* of Basilides.

What, then, are the references we find to St John’s Gospel? Here is one of them: “That each man has his own appointed time, he says (*φησὶ*), the Saviour sufficiently indicates when He says, ‘My hour is not yet come’ (John ii. 4).” And here is another: “The word spoken—Let there be light,—he says, has become the seed of the world from non-existent things, and this, he says, is what is mentioned in the Gospels, ‘He was

<sup>1</sup> Ref. Hær., vii. 27.

<sup>2</sup> See before, p. 231.

the true Light, which lighteth every man coming into the world' (John i. 9)." These seem to be express quotations, and have convinced scholars that Basilides used St John's Gospel. The only drawback is that *φησί* (he says), which is the formula of quotation, cannot be held for certain to imply Basilides himself as apart from his philosophical school. Yet the probability lies this way. "In general," says Matthew Arnold,<sup>1</sup> "Hippolytus uses the formula 'according to them' (*κατ' αὐτούς*) when he quotes from the school, and the formula 'he says' (*φησί*) when he gives the dicta of the master. And in this particular case he manifestly quotes the dicta of Basilides, and no one who had not a theory to serve would ever dream of doubting it. Basilides therefore, about the year 125 A.D., had before him the Fourth Gospel." This clear and definite adhesion of Matthew Arnold is supported by all moderate scholars. The evidential value of this Gnostic testimony may be summed up in the words of the late Dr Ezra Abbot of America:<sup>2</sup> "The use of the Gospel of John by the Gnostic sects in the second century affords a strong, it may seem a decisive, argument for its genuineness. However ingeniously they might pervert its meaning, it is obvious to every intelligent

<sup>1</sup> *God and the Bible*, p. 269.

<sup>2</sup> *Authorship of the Fourth Gospel*, pp. 84, 85.

reader that this Gospel is in reality diametrically opposed to the essential principles of Gnosticism. Such being the case, let us suppose it to have been forged about the middle of the second century in the heat of the Gnostic controversy. It was a book which the Gnostic sects which flourished ten, twenty, or thirty years before had never heard of. How is it possible then to explain the fact that their followers should not only have received it, but received it, so far as appears, without question or discussion? It must have been received by the founders of those sects from the beginning; and we have no reason to distrust the testimony of Hippolytus to what is under these circumstances so probable and is attested by evidence. But if received by the founders of these sects, it must have been received at the same time by the Catholic Christians. They would not at a later period have taken the spurious work from the heretics with whom they were in controversy. It was, then, generally received both by Gnostics and their opponents between 120 and 130 A.D. What follows? It follows that the Gnostics of that day received it because they could not help it. They would not have admitted the authority of a book which could be reconciled with their doctrines only by the most forced interpretations if they could have destroyed its authority by destroying its genuine-

ness. . . . The fact of the reception of the Fourth Gospel as the work of St John at so early a date by parties so violently opposed to each other proves that the genuineness was decisive. The argument is further confirmed by the use of the Gospel by the opposing parties in the later Montanistic controversy and in the disputes about the time of celebrating Easter."

We shall not dwell upon evidence for St John's Gospel which comes from other heretical sects, such as the Peratae and the Ophites, from Cerinthus and Simon Magus.<sup>1</sup> We need only mention the one exception from the universal consent of early Christian antiquity to the genuineness of the Fourth Gospel. The exception, to which reference has already been made, is that of the Alogi. It is doubtful whether the sect thus named was anything but a few eccentric individuals, whom Epiphanius mentions in the fourth century under a nickname having the double meaning of "deniers of the doctrine of the Logos" and "unreasoning mules."<sup>2</sup> There is nothing to show that they were ever formally dealt with as heretics, and this again makes it doubtful whether they really opposed the doctrine of the Logos set forth in the Fourth Gospel. They were, however, op-

<sup>1</sup> See Canonicity, p. 383 ff.

<sup>2</sup> ἄλογον is the name given by the modern Greek to the beast on which he rides.

ponents of the Montanist movement, and it is in all probability they whom Irenæus<sup>1</sup> mentions as not admitting St John's Gospel, and who by frustrating the gift of the Spirit, therein promised and set forth, "sin against the Spirit of God and fall into the unpardonable sin." They are the same people who, according to Dionysius of Alexandria,<sup>2</sup> attribute the Apocalypse to Cerinthus; and Epiphanius,<sup>3</sup> who alone calls them by their name, says they receive neither the Gospel nor the Apocalypse as St John's, but attribute both to Cerinthus. That St John's Gospel was written by Cerinthus is so far from being the case that Irenæus<sup>4</sup> supposed the Apostle to have written it to controvert the docetic teaching of that heretic. Even the Alogi, however, did not dispute that the Fourth Gospel came down from the Apostolic age, seeing that they attributed it to one who was at least a contemporary of the disciple whom Jesus loved. The opposition of the Alogi has been used by Professor Harnack<sup>5</sup> as an argument against the universal acceptance claimed for the Fourfold Gospel in the last decades of the second century by Irenæus. The subject has been discussed at length by Zahn<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Adversus Hæreses*, iii. II. 6-9.

<sup>2</sup> *Euseb. H. E.*, vii. 25.

<sup>3</sup> *Epiph.*, li. 35.

<sup>4</sup> *Adversus Hæreses*, iii. II. 1.

<sup>5</sup> *Das neue Testament um das Jahr 200 A.D.*, pp. 58-70, and *Chronologie*, i. 670, 671.

<sup>6</sup> *GK.* i. 220-262 and ii. 967-973.

and Stanton,<sup>1</sup> the latter of whom concludes a careful and detailed examination with the verdict that the existence of this opposition “does not show that the beliefs to which they were opposed were not commonly held or had been quite recently adopted, still less that they were only then spreading; it does, however, show that the conception of the Fourfold Gospel had not as yet acquired that firm hold on the mind of every professing Christian which only clear and positive definitions and a prescription of some generations could give.” This is a very cautious verdict to pronounce, and Irenæus was well entitled to hold that opposition from a party who do not seem to have ever reached the dignity of a sect, who were of no influence in the Church, who were destined to disappear in the course of a generation, and whose criticism rested solely on internal grounds, was not sufficient to break the unanimity of acceptance experienced by the Four Gospels within the Church.

The position of PAPIAS has already been under consideration. His testimony to St John’s Gospel is largely inferential, but it is affirmative and not, as opponents would have it, negative. Eusebius, who gives his references to St Matthew and St Mark, gives none to the Gospel according to St John. It has been in consequence inferred that

<sup>1</sup> Gospels, pp. 198-212.

Papias never quoted and did not know the Fourth Gospel. This objection has been conclusively disposed of by the essay of Bishop Lightfoot<sup>1</sup> on ‘The Silence of Eusebius.’ Eusebius did not undertake to collect references to the “acknowledged” books of the New Testament, among which he placed the Four Gospels, and Papias might have quoted St John’s Gospel with the greatest frequency without Eusebius ever noticing any instance. Lightfoot has, however, made it probable that when Papias makes the Elder attribute a lack of order (*οὐ μέντοι τάξει*) to St Mark, he is contrasting it with another order, that of the Fourth Gospel. Papias, according to Eusebius,<sup>2</sup> “used testimonies from the First Epistle of John,” and as the Gospel and the First Epistle are from the same hand, the testimony to the Apostolic authorship of the Epistle is indirect testimony to the Gospel. When he speaks of preferring testimonies proceeding from “the Truth itself,”<sup>3</sup> we may have an echo of St John’s Gospel (John xiv. 6); and there is reason to believe that an anonymous quotation in Irenæus<sup>4</sup> is to be referred to him, “For this reason (they taught) the Lord said, There are

<sup>1</sup> Essays on Supernatural Religion, pp. 32-58.

<sup>2</sup> H. E., III. 39. 16.                   <sup>3</sup> III. 39. 4.

<sup>4</sup> Adversus Hæreses, v. 36. 1. 2.

many mansions in My Father's house" (John xiv. 2).<sup>1</sup>

The testimony of POLYCARP is inferential too. It is notable that, while he knows St Paul's writings, and frequently quotes the First Epistle of St Peter, and shows some acquaintance with the Synoptic Gospels, he not only has no quotation from St John's Gospel, but is apparently uninfluenced by St John's characteristic conception of Christ. We may be fairly certain, however, that he knew the Fourth Gospel and admitted it to be a true witness to the Person and work of Christ. Assume that St John's Gospel had been written about 130 A.D., Irenæus might have been a hearer of Polycarp by that time; he may have heard him as late as 150, but the more probable date is 130-140. If a Gospel had already appeared, attributed to St John, but containing a representation of our Lord and His ministry different from that which the Apostle himself was accustomed to give in his oral teaching, Polycarp would have known and commented upon the fact. If Polycarp had pronounced such a Gospel a forgery, Irenæus would

<sup>1</sup> Much stress cannot be laid upon the "Argumentum" to St John's Gospel in a manuscript of the ninth century, where we read: "The Gospel of John was revealed and given to the Churches, . . . even as Papias of Hierapolis, a dear disciple of John, has related in his Five Books."

have heard it. Irenæus accepted the Fourth Gospel unhesitatingly as the work of St John, and this he could not have done if Polycarp had expressed doubts regarding the correctness of its representation of the Lord. Irenæus, when he vouched for the existence and credibility of the Fourfold Gospel and attributed the Fourth of the series to John the Apostle, was speaking of what he learned from Polycarp, who related his reminiscences "altogether in accordance with the Scriptures,"<sup>1</sup> among which Irenæus reckoned the Fourth Gospel. John, Polycarp, Irenæus, are the links of an indestructible chain of proof in favour of the genuineness of the Fourth Gospel and its credibility as a historical work.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 63.

<sup>2</sup> See a cogent argument by the late Dr R. W. Dale in 'The Living Christ and the Four Gospels,' p. 260 ff.

## CHAPTER XV.

ST JOHN.—II.

WHEN we come to IGNATIUS we are upon the very brink of the Apostolic age. The exact year of his martyrdom cannot be determined from any data extant, and various years from 107 to 117 A.D. have been assigned to that event. But adopting the latest of these years, we are but a little distance removed from the last survivors of the Apostles, and, as we shall see, the latest of those years is even more favourable for the traditional view of the Fourth Gospel than the earliest. We may now approach the consideration of his testimony with the conviction that the seven letters of what is called the Vossian recension of the Ignatian Epistles are genuine. Lack of assurance as to the genuineness of any of the letters in their various forms for a long time prevented scholars from doing justice to their evidence. The labours of Lightfoot, Zahn, and Harnack, and the more recent

investigations of Von der Goltz and Dietze,<sup>1</sup> have discovered a weight of testimony in the Ignatius letters not realised before.

Ignatius was undoubtedly acquainted with the Gospel history, and his acquaintance with the Gospel records and St Paul's Epistles is unquestionable. Yet though his letters abound in allusions and references, there are no express quotations, and scarcely any formula of quotations, in the references he makes.<sup>2</sup> St John's name is never mentioned, not even in the Epistle to the Church of Ephesus, so long instructed and presided over by the last survivor of the Apostolic band. But though he is not expressly named in this Epistle, it is more than likely that there is an implicit reference to him in words in which Ignatius prays that he may be found in the lot of the Ephesian Christians "who also have

<sup>1</sup> Lightfoot in his great edition of the Apostolic Fathers, Zahn in an early work, 'Ignatius von Antiochien,' as well as in his 'History of the New Testament Canon,' Harnack in his 'Chronologie' (p. 381 ff.), Von der Goltz in an examination of the doctrinal bearings of the letters in 'Texte und Untersuchungen' (xii. 3), and Dietze in 'Studien u. Kritiken' (1905), have done much to give us certainty on the subject. Funk in his 'Patres Apostolici' (p. lv ff.), Ramsay in his 'Church in the Roman Empire' (p. 311 ff.), and Von Dobschütz in his 'Christian Life in the Primitive Church' (p. 235 ff.), accept their genuineness. There are at the present time few scholars who question their genuineness, and the result is a greater interest in the personality and the writings of Ignatius.

<sup>2</sup> He does use the expression *ὡς γέγραπται* in Magn. xii., but in an Old Testament reference.

always agreed with the Apostles in the power of Jesus Christ.”<sup>1</sup> Since St Paul and St John were the Apostles who founded and built up the Ephesian Church, it is natural to think of them as “the Apostles” referred to. In the very next chapter of the Ephesian Epistle he singles out St Paul for mention, calling the Ephesians “fellow-partakers of the mysteries” with him (*Παύλου συμμύσται*), but he does so because of the resemblance between his outward circumstances and those of St Paul the prisoner and martyr of Christ (*τοῦ μεμαρτυρημένου, ἀξιομακαρίστου*).<sup>2</sup> For a like reason he refers in the Epistle to the Roman Church<sup>3</sup> to St Peter and St Paul as men with whom he is not worthy to be compared in the prospect of martyrdom. In his undoubted allusions to 1 Corinthians, and less certain references to Ephesians, Romans, Galatians, and other Epistles, he is as reticent regarding St Paul as he is regarding St John in equally sure allusions to the Fourth Gospel.

The absence of any appeal to documents, even if that had been already a customary thing, is not to be wondered at. Ignatius wrote as a man under sentence of death, held prisoner by ten

<sup>1</sup> Ephes. xi. 2.

<sup>2</sup> See Lightfoot, Ignatius, Ephes. xii. ; and compare Harnack, ‘Chronologie,’ p. 675 n.

<sup>3</sup> Rom. iv.

“leopards”—a company of Roman soldiers—who, the more generously they were treated, became the fiercer.<sup>1</sup> His letters were thrown off in the white heat of an intense excitement, under emotions of no ordinary power, with martyrdom as his overmastering ambition, which he implores his friends to do nothing to disappoint. Christ is his passion; His Cross and Death and Resurrection are the sure foundation of his hopes; and the faith that is in Him will carry the martyr through all. That he does not in these circumstances mention his source, and that he does not formally quote, can be no objection to his testimony. When it is suggested<sup>2</sup> that sometimes another passage than that alluded to would have been more to his purpose if the Fourth Gospel had been before him, the criticism is unreasonable. He had no documents with him and no opportunity to search for exact parallels; and when one is quoting from memory, the best does not always come at command. Prolonged verbal quotations are out of the question; and so far as the exact reproduction of the language of Scripture is concerned, it may be doubted “whether Ignatius, in whatever age he might have lived, would have strictly conformed himself to the

<sup>1</sup> Rom. chaps. iv., v.

<sup>2</sup> New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers, p. 83.

religious phraseology of his times.”<sup>1</sup> It is clear from every page that he is saturated with the Evangel, and has its great facts and truths laid up in the chambers of memory and in the depths of his soul.<sup>2</sup>

When we proceed to references to St John’s Gospel and Epistles in the Ignatian Letters, we find quite a large number of the kind we might expect. For example, in five of these Letters,<sup>3</sup> and in two of them twice, the expression, “the prince of this world” (*ὁ ἀρχῶν τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου*), is found, and found in connexions so analogous to the passages in St John that we can scarcely doubt its derivation from the Fourth Gospel (John xii. 31, xiv. 30, xvi. 11).<sup>4</sup> Again,

<sup>1</sup> Swete, Patristic Study, p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Referring to at least a dozen allusions to 1 Corinthians and as many echoes of its language all through the Epistle, a writer in ‘The New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers’ (pp. 67, 68) says, “Ignatius must have known this Epistle almost by heart. Although there are no quotations (in the strictest sense, with mention of the source), echoes of its language and thought pervade the whole of his writings in such a manner as to leave no doubt whatever that he was acquainted with the First Epistle to the Corinthians.”

<sup>3</sup> Eph. xvii. xix.; Magn. i.; Trall. iv.; Rom. vii.; Philad. vi.

<sup>4</sup> There is a verbal divergence, *αἰώνος*, which is never used in this sense by St John, who employs *κόσμος*. But as the governing word in the expression is *ἀρχῶν*, and as the connection is analogous, we may surely waive the divergence. The parallel more verbally exact with 1 Cor. ii. 6, 8, given by the writer in ‘New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers,’ is made much more remote by the plural *ἀρχῶντες* and by the context.

there is good reason to hold with Zahn and Lightfoot that the passage in Ephesians (xvii. 1) is a reminiscence of St John's Gospel (John xii. 3) rather than of St Matthew or St Mark: "Therefore the Lord received ointment upon His head, in order that He might breathe immortality upon the Church."

In the Epistle to the Romans<sup>1</sup> there is the striking saying, "My love has been crucified (*ὁ ἐμὸς ἔρως ἐσταύρωται*); there is not in me the fire of material love, but water living and speaking in me, saying within me, 'Come to the Father.'" Lightfoot declares this passage to be wholly "inspired by the Fourth Gospel," and it is quite parallel to "Thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water. . . . For the water which I shall give him shall be in him a well of living water springing up unto everlasting life" (John iv. 10, 14); and is also to be compared with, "Jesus cried and said, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (John vii. 37, 38).

In a consecutive passage of the same Epistle (vii. 3) there is a strongly Johannine reference: "I take no pleasure in food of corruption, nor yet in pleasures of this life. I desire the bread

<sup>1</sup> vii. 2.

of God, which is the flesh of Jesus Christ, who was of the seed of David, and I desire as drink His blood, which is love incorruptible." Here the phrase "food of corruption" ( $\tauροφῆ φθορᾶς$ ) is a characteristically Ignatian parallel to "meat that perisheth" ( $\tauὴν βρῶσιν τὴν ἀπολλυμένην$ ) (John iv. 32); and "the bread of God, which is the flesh of Jesus Christ," strongly recalls "he that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day" (John vi. 54). To the same great discourse of Jesus as it is recorded by St John belong "the bread of God" (Eph. v. 2), and "breaking one bread which is an elixir of immortality" ( $\phiάρμακον ἀθανασίας$ ) (Eph. xx.)

In the Epistle to the Philadelphians (c. vii.) there is another Johannine passage: "For though some have desired to deceive me according to the flesh, yet my spirit is not deceived, being from God. For it knoweth whence it cometh and whither it goeth, and discloseth hidden things." The word "discloseth" ( $\epsilonλεγχεῖ$ ) is not exclusively yet peculiarly Johannine, especially when used of the Spirit (John iii. 20, xvi. 8). The whole passage recalls, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth" (John iii. 8); and also, "I know whence I came and whither I go" (viii. 14).

In this connexion also a striking saying of Ignatius may be quoted (*Eph.* viii. 2): “They that are fleshly cannot do spiritual things, nor they that are spiritual fleshly things, as also faith cannot do the works of unbelief, nor unbelief the works of faith.” This may very well be derived from *John* iii. 6: “That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” And when we read again (*Eph.* xiv. 2): “No one professing faith sinneth, nor does any one who has got love hate,” we have Ignatian echoes of passages in St John’s First Epistle.

These passages show the martyr steeped not only in Johannine doctrine, but also in Johannine phraseology. There are other passages in which Ignatius has seized upon a thought or a truth of the Fourth Gospel and clothed it in metaphors and similes wholly his own—giving it a practical application quite different from what it originally possessed. An excellent illustration is furnished by the words of Jesus: “I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me” (*John* xii. 32). In Ignatius<sup>1</sup> this takes the highly pictorial representation: “Who was truly nailed to the tree under Pontius Pilate and Herod in His flesh (and we are the fruit of His Divinely blessed passion), in order that by His resurrection He might set up a banner for

<sup>1</sup> *Smyr.*, i. 2.

ever for His saints and them that believe, whether among Jews or among Gentiles in the one body of His Church." And he may have combined with this the thought that "Jesus should die for that nation, and not for that nation only, but that He should gather into one the children of God that were scattered abroad" (John xi. 51, 52). It may even be from the former passage that Ignatius has obtained the suggestion which has grown into the picture:<sup>1</sup> "Prepared for a building of God the Father, raised up to the heights by the engine of Jesus Christ, which is the Cross, using for a rope the Holy Spirit." Of this manner of treating his evangelic source there are not a few examples. Von der Goltz<sup>2</sup> takes exception to this unconventional treatment, and argues that because Ignatius does not use the language of St John, and gives his thought a turn quite different, therefore he cannot have been acquainted with a written Gospel. His manner of treating St Paul, however, is precisely similar, and his references to 1 Corinthians, Ephesians, and other Pauline Epistles are not disputed.<sup>3</sup>

More conclusive, perhaps, than even these striking correspondences is the profound affinity between the theological teaching of Ignatius and that of St John. We find not only the

<sup>1</sup> Eph. ix. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Texte u. Untersuchungen, xii. 140.

<sup>3</sup> See Dietze, 'Studien u. Kritiken,' 1905, p. 589.

key-words of St John reappearing in the letters of Ignatius, such as Life, Knowledge, Truth, Faith and Love<sup>1</sup> (*ζωή, γνῶσις, ἀλήθεια, πίστις καὶ ἀγάπη*), Life and Death, God and the Prince of this World, Flesh and Spirit, and other such relations, but also the Johannine presentation of the Person, Words, and Work of Christ, and even of the Christian life. With both St John and Ignatius the Christian life is Christo-centric. Both of them exalt what Dr Chalmers called “the expulsive power of a new affection.” If St John dwells upon the mystical union of Christ and His people, Ignatius speaks of Christians as Christ-bearers (*Χριστοφόροι, Θεοφόροι*). St John says (1 John v. 1): “Every one that believeth is begotten of God, and every one that loveth Him that begat loveth also Him that is begotten of Him.” Ignatius sums up this in the words (Eph. xiv.): “Faith is the beginning of true life and love is the end” (*ζωῆς ἀρχὴ μὲν πίστις, τέλος δὲ ἀγάπη*). The emphasis he lays upon the Person of the historic Christ shows that his

<sup>1</sup> This, however, is not St John’s characteristic order, which is “Love and Faith” (Rev. ii. 19). St Paul’s order is that which Ignatius follows (cf. 1 Thess. iii. 6; v. 8, and other places). As regards Truth (*ἀλήθεια*), Grill hazards the statement that it represents *σοφία*, which the writer of the Fourth Gospel could not use because of its degradation by Gnostic sects, and makes this negative inference a point in favour of the late origin of the book (*Untersuchungen*, p. 183). E. F. Scott, in ‘The Fourth Gospel,’ p. 93, has the same statement with no better ground.

interest, like that of St John, is not speculative but practical; so different from the interest, for example, of Philo, who, dealing with similar themes, is abstract and metaphysical. It is not the light which the Logos sends streaming into humanity that is the salvation of men, but the Divine Christ,<sup>1</sup> who appeared in real human activity, that brings the knowledge of God and life eternal. It is His manifestation in the flesh that brings to men salvation. In the God-man the Evangelist has seen the fulness of grace and truth. In all this, St John's representation, as we know it in the Gospel, is closely reproduced by Ignatius. St John affirms the perfect unity of Jesus with the Father (x. 30, xiv. 10): Ignatius<sup>2</sup> speaks of the Son as perfectly joined in one with the Father (*ἡνωμένος τῷ πατρὶ*); He is the unity of God (*Θεοῦ ἔνωσις*); to Him alone the secrets of God are confided (*ὅς μόνος πεπίστευται τὰ κρυπτὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ*). Yet there is a subordination

<sup>1</sup> Ignatius does not shrink from speaking of "Our God, Jesus Christ," and uses this language again and again (Eph. inscription; Rom. inscription; Pol. viii. 3). This use of *Θεός* as a designation of Christ is itself Johannine. St Paul "never used the expression *Θεός* of Christ, since he has not adopted, like John, the Alexandrine form of conceiving and setting forth the Divine essence of Christ, but has adhered to the popular, concrete, strictly monotheistic terminology, not modified by philosophic speculation even for the designation of Christ; and he always accurately distinguishes God and Christ" (Meyer on Romans ix. 5).

<sup>2</sup> Magn. vii.; Trall. ix.; Phil. ix.

in St John's conception of the relation of the Son to the Father which is exactly reproduced in Ignatius. As the Christ of St John can do nothing of Himself but what He sees the Father do (John v. 19), so is it with the Christ of Ignatius. "As therefore the Lord did nothing without the Father, being united with Him, neither by Himself nor by His Apostles," he says.<sup>1</sup> But he adds, "Have ye all recourse as unto one temple of God, as unto one altar, unto one Jesus Christ, who came forth from one Father and is with One (*καὶ εἰς ἑνα ὄντα*; cf. John i. 1, 2, 18), and hath returned unto One" (cf. John xvi. 28). He is "an Imitator of the Father" (*μιμητὴς τοῦ πατρός*);<sup>2</sup> He submits Himself wholly to His Father's will;<sup>3</sup> He was upon earth in everything obedient to His Father.<sup>4</sup> Jesus is the Sent of God, the Door of the Father, both in St John and in Ignatius. The characteristic designation of Christ as the Word (*ὁ λόγος*) in St John's prologue finds a parallel also in Ignatius. Writing to the Romans,<sup>5</sup> he says, "If ye should keep silence and leave me alone, I am a word of God." In the highest sense of all, only One is *ὁ λόγος*, the Word of God; but all His saints made perfect in knowledge are utterances, words of God, as being fragments of the One Word.

<sup>1</sup> Magn. vii 1, 2.<sup>2</sup> Phil. vii. 2.<sup>3</sup> Magn. xiii.<sup>4</sup> Smyr., viii.<sup>5</sup> ii. 1.

Throughout his letters Ignatius lets it be seen that he builds his Christian theology on other than philosophical and speculative conceptions. Like St John, his interest is experimental and religious.<sup>1</sup>

Though verbal quotations are almost entirely wanting, the whole course of the thought of Ignatius in these letters betrays the influence of St John. What is the nature of that influence? Does it come from some stream of oral tradition carrying down the teaching of the Beloved Disciple? Or does it come from the Fourth Gospel, studied and pondered till the thought of Ignatius became saturated with its characteristic doctrine? There are one or two considerations to be borne in mind in deciding what should be our answer.

i. It is remarkable how little there is in the Epistles of Ignatius substantially new or divergent from the written Gospel tradition. When we have mentioned the reference to a bodiless Spirit<sup>2</sup> (*οὐκ εἰμὶ δαιμόνιον ἀσώματον*), and to the star surpassing in brightness all the stars<sup>3</sup> (*ἀστὴρ ἐν οὐρανῷ ἔλαμψεν ὑπὲρ πάντας τὸν ἀστέρας*), we have mentioned the most important of the allusions which can be called extra-

<sup>1</sup> See the whole of the excellent discussion in Dietze.

<sup>2</sup> Smyr., iii. Cf. St Luke xxiv. 39. See p. 232.

<sup>3</sup> Eph. xix. 2. Cf. St Matt. ii. 2.

canonical. If Ignatius had been dependent upon oral tradition floating downwards from the times of Christ and the Apostles, it seems very improbable that his writings would have been so free from accretions and impurities, and that he would have kept with such strictness within Evangelic limits.

2. With special reference to St John, it is scarcely less remarkable how closely he adheres to his text when, as seems so probable, he does found upon his Gospel. The direction and application which he gives to a thought may sometimes be different, but it is ultimately traceable to the Apostle, and is consistently developed and worked out from the Johannine germ. This is all in accordance with his manner. “With an aptitude for creating compounds and a happy gift of using old words in new lights, he united a power of sarcasm in which he is, to use a word of his own, *ἀσύγκριτος*, ‘sans pareil,’ and a vividness of imagination that enabled him to transform a simple word into a picture, which is often framed in true poetry.”<sup>1</sup>

3. When Von der Goltz assigns his reproductions of Johannine doctrine to some tradition of the Apostle’s oral teaching, to the “influence of a community itself influenced by Johannine

<sup>1</sup> Montgomery Hitchcock, ‘Hermathena,’ xxxi. p. 456.

thought,”<sup>1</sup> he suggests an explanation of which there is no hint in the letters. There is, moreover, no reason to believe that the type of Gospel tradition embodied in St John’s Gospel had established itself within reach of Ignatius at Antioch or in Syria for such a length of time as to give him the grasp of its contents which he displays apart from the written Gospel. It is scarcely credible that such intimate and profound apprehension of its spiritual teaching could have been obtained through an intermediate process of this character. Even if Ignatius had been such an interpreter of St John as St Mark was of St Peter, deriving his knowledge of Johannine teaching straight from St John himself, he could scarcely have done greater justice to his source. If he was acquainted with the Synoptic Gospels and St Paul’s Epistles, which is generally admitted, no *a priori* theories of the origin of St John’s Gospel should be allowed to depreciate the clear testimony of Ignatius to it.

4. Acquaintance with the written Gospel of St John would explain everything. It would explain the verbal correspondences such as they are, and the far more important correspondence in doctrine, in the conception of Christ’s person, and in the view of the Christian life. The absence

<sup>1</sup> *Texte und Untersuchungen*, p. 139. Cf. Sanday, ‘Criticism of the Fourth Gospel,’ p. 243.

of reference to St John himself in express terms is no objection. None of the other Evangelists is named; and even St Paul, who is known to the writer, and whose doctrine also colours the letters, is mentioned apart from the references that are made to his Epistles. Those who, like Professors Harnack and Von Dobschütz,<sup>1</sup> attribute the Fourth Gospel to John the Presbyter are precluded from making this objection, for it lies equally against their view of the authorship. Assuming that the author is John the Apostle, we have seen that the irrelevant applications of Johannine thought are only in the manner of Ignatius. Fifteen or twenty years before he wrote these letters, Ignatius may have had access to the Johannine writings; and those years of thought and study by a mind so active and daring upon the presentation of Christ and His salvation therein contained may have yielded those views of the Incarnation, the Crucifixion, and the Life that is in Christ which are poured forth fresh and fervent from his heart as he goes forward to meet the wild beasts and to grasp the martyr's crown. We cannot tell when the Fourth Gospel first in written form was introduced into

<sup>1</sup> Christian Life in the Primitive Church, p. 235 ff. Professor Harnack (Chronologie, p. 681 n.) considers it highly probable that the Apostle John had once been in Ephesus, although the Ephesian Christians were St Paul's fellow-members of Christ (*συμμύσται*).

Syria, but it is not altogether without significance that it is Theophilus of Antioch who first of early Christian writers, about 180 A.D., gives St John as the name of the writer. If we are right in accepting the Ignatian letters from which we have quoted as genuine, we have in Ignatius a most valuable witness to the early circulation and use of the Fourth Gospel.<sup>1</sup>

Of the less certain early witnesses it is not necessary to say much. POLYCARP has no reminiscences of the Gospel, but he has a quotation<sup>2</sup> from the First Epistle of John (1 John iv. 2; cf. 2 John 7), "For every one who shall not confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is anti-christ." As the Gospel and the Epistles are held to be a unity, this quotation is probable evidence of the knowledge of the Gospel by Polycarp. HERMAS<sup>3</sup> speaks of Christ as "the Gate" (*ἡ πύλη*) and the only way of access to the Father; as having cleansed the sins of His people and shown them the paths of life, giving them the law which he had received from His

<sup>1</sup> It is hardly worthy of mention that Kreyenbühl, in his 'Evangelium der Wahrheit,' makes St John dependent upon Ignatius, reversing the order of tradition and of nature. A similarly impossible view is taken by Conrady in his 'Quelle der kanonischen Kindheitsgeschichte Jesu,' who maintains that the star of surpassing brightness in Ignatius, and the star of the Magi in St Matthew, are derived from a common source—the Protevangelium Jacobi. Freaks of criticism like this do not require refutation.

<sup>2</sup> Pol. ad Phil., vii. 1.   <sup>3</sup> Sim. ix. 12. 5; v. 6. 3; Mand. xii. 3. 5.

Father; Whose commandments are not grievous (John x. 7, 18; 1 John v. 3). BARNABAS has no verbal correspondences with St John, but Johannine thought is present in the Epistle.<sup>1</sup> Like Justin, he has a reference to the Brazen Serpent (John iii. 14, 15); he has the words, "Whosoever shall eat of these shall live for ever" (John vi.); and there is a reference to Abraham looking forward to Jesus (John viii. 56).<sup>2</sup> The DIDACHE has phrases suggestive of the Fourth Gospel as well as ideas recalling the Johannine presentation of Christ and His words. The eucharistic prayers in chapters ix. and x. contain several such words and phrases. "The holy vine of Thy servant David" resembles the teaching of Jesus in the allegory of the Vine and the Branches, but the words may be derived from the Old Testament or Jewish apocryphal literature. "We thank Thee for the life and knowledge Thou didst make known to us through Thy servant Jesus," reminds us of John xvii. 3, and the verb ( $\gammaνωρίζω$ ) is one of St John's characteristic words. These expressions, however, on our view of the position of the 'Didache' in early Christian literature,

<sup>1</sup> Compare also  $\epsilon\lambda\thetaεῖν \epsilon\nu \sigmaαρκὶ$  (Bar. v. 10=1 John iv. 2);  $\phiαν-εροῦσθαι$  applied to Christ (vi. 7, 9=1 John i. 2, iii. 5, 8);  $\kappaατοικεῖν \epsilon\nu \etaμῖν$  (vi. 14=John i. 14).

<sup>2</sup> Bar. xii., xi., ix.

rather point to a later origin for the Didache than witness to the early use of the Fourth Gospel.

Of the actual composition of the Fourth Gospel we have an account in the Muratorian Fragment. "The author of the Fourth Gospel," says the writer, "was John of the disciples." And he tells<sup>1</sup> how it was revealed to the Apostle Andrew that John should write, the rest of them acting as revisers of the result of his labour. "For thus," the Fragmentist concludes, "he professes himself not only an eyewitness but also a hearer, and, moreover, a historian of all the wonderful works of the Lord in order." There is also the tradition which comes through Clement of Alexandria, preserved in the pages of Eusebius,<sup>2</sup> and the tradition given by Eusebius<sup>3</sup> himself, to the effect that St John wrote his Gospel because there was lacking in the other three "an account of the deeds done by Christ at the beginning of His ministry." In his closing years at Ephesus the Beloved Disciple, in the last decade of the first century, placed on record his recollections of the life and work and discourses of his Master. He had completed his task when others give a final word of authentication: "This is the disciple which beareth witness of these things and wrote these things, and we know that his witness is true. And there

<sup>1</sup> See above, pp. 84, 85.

<sup>2</sup> See pp. 244, 245.

<sup>3</sup> H. E., III. 24.

are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that should be written" (John xxi. 24, 25).

## CHAPTER XVI.

## IDENTITY OF THE FOURTH EVANGELIST.

THERE remains still to be considered the identity of the Evangelist, a subject which has come to bulk largely in the criticism of the Fourth Gospel. Just when it seemed as if the Gospel, which had been placed late in the second century by Baur and the Tübingen school, had been restored to the Apostolic age by the efforts of a saner criticism, the doctrine is promulgated that not John the Apostle, the son of Zebedee, but John the Presbyter, the disciple of the Lord, is really the author.

Keim, in his ‘Jesus of Nazareth,’<sup>1</sup> is the first explicitly to ascribe the traditions concerning John the Apostle to the Presbyter of that name mentioned by Papias. Lützelberger, as early as 1840, had maintained that John the Apostle never set foot in Asia Minor, and consequently could not have written there the Revelation or

<sup>1</sup> i. 211 ff.

the Fourth Gospel or the Epistles. Keim advances upon this, and, denying that the Apostle ever was in Ephesus, makes the Presbyter John of Papias "the veritable hero of Church History in Asia Minor, and the true winner of the fame which has been allowed to gather round the name of the son of Zebedee."<sup>1</sup> He appeals to the absence of any allusion to John in Asia Minor by Ignatius or Polycarp, and declares that Irenæus, partly from misunderstanding and partly from the necessity of having an Apostolic authority to oppose to the progress of Gnosticism, proclaimed John the Apostle of Asia Minor about 190 A.D.

Upon this Professor Harnack in turn improves. He maintains<sup>2</sup> that those followers of John of Ephesus, who set their seal to the Fourth Gospel as the work of the disciple whom Jesus loved (John xxi. 24), of set purpose started the legend that the author was John, the son of Zebedee. "When the Gospel, after the death of the Presbyter John, began to be circulated, it was at first still well known that it was no literary production of the son of Zebedee. Papias has definitely distinguished between the Presbyter and the Apostle, and has referred to the former the opinions given regarding Matthew and Mark (which have later also been transferred to the Apostle). But already Papias, through the oral

<sup>1</sup> Canonicity, p. xlvi.

<sup>2</sup> Chronologie, p. 674 ff.

traditions about which he took such pains, stood under the influence of Presbyters, of whom some perhaps purposely set on foot the legend that the Presbyter John was the Apostle.”<sup>1</sup> Harnack bravely faces the consequences of this theory, that Polycarp, in those recitals of John’s accounts of the Lord’s life and discourses which Irenæus and Florinus heard from him, was speaking not of John the Apostle but of John the Presbyter; that the John who had the encounter with Cerinthus was really the Presbyter. It was, on Harnack’s theory, not the Apostle that was the teacher of Papias, that was the hero of the story of the young robber told by Clement of Alexandria, that declared love to be all that was needed for the welfare of the Church, and that was the author of the Fourth Gospel, the Epistles, and the Apocalypse (for he holds to the unity of the Johannine writings),—the credit of all these was surreptitiously filched from the rightful owner and associated by deliberate fraud with the name of an Apostle, the son of Zebedee. And yet he feels that the process would have been easier if it could be shown that John the Apostle had been, even for a little while, in Ephesus, and thinks it “overwhelmingly probable” that John the son of Zebedee was one of those whom Ignatius had in his eye when he reminds the

<sup>1</sup> Chronologie, p. 679.

Ephesians in his letter<sup>1</sup> of the intercourse they had had with Apostles.

We have already<sup>2</sup> shown good grounds for holding that the Presbyter John of Papias is himself the Apostle, and owes what shadowy importance he had to the mistaken conception of Eusebius. But granting that such a person existed,—a man who filled the place in Ephesus which came to be attributed to John the Apostle, and who was sufficiently gifted to write the Fourth Gospel and the Apocalypse,—what a marvel his complete disappearance from early Church history, and how rapid the vanishing of all trace of him from the region and the age which he is supposed to have adorned!

One of the most interesting of the numerous variations of the theory maintained by Keim is that of the late Dr Hugo Delff<sup>3</sup> of Husum, in Hanover. The disciple whom Jesus loved was not of the number of the Twelve,—not a fisherman of Galilee, but a member of the aristocracy of Jerusalem,—not only acquainted with the high priest, but even connected with one of the high priestly families. He found his way to Asia Minor and Ephesus, and is the John whom the

<sup>1</sup> See p. 274.

<sup>2</sup> See pp. 190-200.

<sup>3</sup> Geschichte des Rabbi Jesus von Nazareth; Das vierte Evangelium. His views are criticised in detail in Zahn's Introduction (Eng. trans., iii. 227, 230 ff.)

Church in Asia honoured and revered. He is the Presbyter John of Papias, the author of the Fourth Gospel, and the John mentioned by Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus about 190 A.D., as having worn the high priest's frontlet of gold. Although this view plausibly gathers up points in the testimony of the Fourth Gospel and points in the patristic testimony to our Evangelist, it can only subsist by doing violence to the whole of the early Christian tradition. This John of Jerusalem, who stood outside the number of the Twelve, and who in course of time appears as the Presbyter of Papias, can only be made to displace John the son of Zebedee by the most violent treatment alike of the Gospels and of the testimony of the Fathers.

There is one point in the external evidence which has not yet been noticed, and which finds an important place in the theory of Delff and others. This is the testimony of what is now known as De Boor's Fragment,<sup>1</sup>—almost the only one of the discoveries of recent years which has not gone to confirm the traditional view of the Gospel history,—in which it is said that “John the Divine (*ὁ θεολόγος*) and James his brother had been slain (*ἀνηρέθησαν*) by the Jews.” This statement comes from an Oxford manuscript of

<sup>1</sup> Texte u. Untersuchungen (v. 2, p. 170). Cf. Funk, Patres Apostolici, p. 366.

the seventh or eighth century, and may be an epitome of what is said in his Chronicle by Philip of Side. It has been seized upon with avidity, and has become an important buttress to the view that John the Apostle never was in Asia, and could not have been the author of the Fourth Gospel. The statement is not without some corroboration. A manuscript of the ninth century, containing the Chronicle of Georgius Hamartolus,<sup>1</sup> after telling how Nerva had recalled John the Apostle and Evangelist from his exile on Patmos and given him permission to live the rest of his days in Ephesus till he “was counted worthy of martyrdom,” goes on to say that Papias, who had seen the Apostle “with his own eyes” (*αὐτόπτης*), declares, in the second book of his ‘Expositions,’ that he was put to death (*ἀνηρέθη*) by the Jews. The Chronicle adds that by this martyr death John, with his brother, fulfilled the prediction of Christ that they should drink of His cup and be baptised with His baptism (Mark x. 38, 39). Upon this prediction of Christ and its presumed fulfilment in the death of both the sons of Zebedee at the hands of the Jews, as vouched for by Papias, Dr E. Schwartz, the learned editor of the Berlin *Eusebius*, bases a thesis,<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Funk, *Patres Apostolici*, p. 368.

<sup>2</sup> Über den Tod der Söhne Zebedæi.

the object of which is to prove that the entire tradition concerning the long-lived Apostle John of Ephesus is a myth. He holds that the words of Christ as recorded by St Mark predict the simultaneous martyrdom of both Apostles, or, rather, that on the basis of that fact the prophecy was invented. Upon his view that the deaths both took place together in 44 A.D. (*Acts xii. 2*), there could be no residence of the Apostle in Ephesus and no authorship by him of *Gospel* or *Apocalypse*.

Arguments based upon testimony so precarious and so largely hypothetical might well be met with a blank refusal to entertain them. The following considerations will serve to show what a slender basis the huge fabric of speculation reared by this recent negative criticism has to rest upon.

i. The statement purporting to come from Georgius Hamartolus (850 A.D.) is given on the authority of a single transcriber of his ‘*Chronicle*,’ all the other known manuscripts—of which his most recent editor<sup>1</sup> has described twenty-six—being without it. It may represent an extract in some collection of passages, and, at any rate, even though it gives chapter and verse of the ‘*Expositions*’ of Papias, does not

<sup>1</sup> Muralt, St Petersburg, 1859, p. xvii. See Zahn, *Forschungen*, vi. 147 ff.

represent the work of Georgius himself. That the statement of the De Boor Fragment cannot be a direct quotation is equally certain, because Papias could not have written of John under the designation of "the Divine," an epithet which did not attach itself to the Apostle till the fourth century. Testimony which comes to us from documents so late as the ninth and tenth centuries, and which may have come through several hands before it was taken from its ultimate authority, Papias, is not to be entertained; and, when it does violence in its main statement to all other known tradition on the subject, can only be regarded as essentially erroneous. That such feeble support to their theories has been seized upon so eagerly by the advanced critics shows how slender a foundation they have in the early literature and history for their fantastic theories.

2. The two authorities thus relied upon are by no means in accord in what they tell us regarding John. The De Boor Fragment can by itself be interpreted to mean that James and John died together at the hands of the Jews at Jerusalem, and is so interpreted by Schwartz, even though such an interpretation does violence to the Apostolic history in the Acts and the Epistles. The excerpt of Georgius implies that John had lived in Asia and was known to Papias,

and the context tells of his residence in Ephesus as the last survivor of the followers of the Lord. How the blunder arose we may not be able to say. Lightfoot<sup>1</sup> has surmised that a line has been left out by the transcriber of the excerpt from Georgius, and Zahn favours the view that John the Baptist has been confused with John the Apostle. The likelihood of such error and confusion on the part of transcribers of the fifth or ninth centuries is vastly more credible than that the Churches and Christians of Asia Minor in the second century were ignorant of the fact, known to Papias alone, that John, who leaned upon the Master's breast at Supper and was so prominent among the Twelve, perished in the persecution of Herod Agrippa, and never had the career Christian antiquity has been wont to assign to him at all. If Papias had really written the words which are attributed to him, why, as Professor Zahn<sup>2</sup> asks, did people vex themselves for centuries about the fulfilment of the prediction of the Lord (Mark x. 28), and already in the second century invent the legends of the poisoned cup and the boiling oil in order to show how the prediction was fulfilled in the case of St John? And why did Eusebius leave a passage unnoticed which would have served so

<sup>1</sup> Essays on Supernatural Religion, p. 212.

<sup>2</sup> Forschungen, vi. 150.

well as a weapon against the Apostolic character of the author of the Apocalypse and the teacher of Papias, if Papias himself had furnished him with it?

3. If there had been an early mistake as to the identity of the Evangelist, or if the Church had purposely transferred from the rightful owner to John the Apostle the traditions which have been for so long associated with his name, it is remarkable that so many early writers had been involved in the transference, independently and in different generations. Justin Martyr,<sup>1</sup> in the middle of the second century, speaks of a man named John, the Apostle of the Lord, as the author of the Apocalypse,—a reference carrying the Asiatic residence of St John along with it. Irenæus testifies that John the disciple of the Lord, who also leaned upon His breast, himself too published the Gospel while he was living at Ephesus, in Asia. Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus, 190 A.D., writing<sup>2</sup> to Victor and the Church of Rome on the Paschal controversy, appeals to the example of the Apostles John and Philip, and to the uniform practice established by them in Asia in support of the day for the celebration of the Christian passover as the fourteenth of Nisan, whatever the day of the week, instead of the Friday customary in Rome. He classes John,

<sup>1</sup> Dial., c. 81.

<sup>2</sup> Euseb. H. E., V. 24.

to whom he appeals, with Philip, and calls him “a witness and a teacher who reclined upon the bosom of the Lord.” Clement of Alexandria, who lived till 212 A.D., and who had for one of his teachers a certain Ionian with special knowledge of Asia, tells the story of John and the young robber<sup>1</sup> without the slightest doubt that it was the Apostle who was concerned. Tertullian of Carthage, in North Africa, speaking<sup>2</sup> of the Apostolical succession in the Churches of Christendom, refers to the Church of the Smyrnæans as relating that Polycarp was appointed their bishop by John, and takes for granted that this was the Apostle. That all these authorities, having independent sources of information and being well versed in the history of the times, could have been mistaken, or could have conspired in the publication of a falsehood, is incredible.

4. The identity of the Evangelist, the ἐπιστήθιος of Irenæus, the teacher of Polycarp, with the son of Zebedee, the son of Thunder, the Apostle of the Lord, is established by many infallible proofs. That he was associated with St Peter in the events succeeding Pentecost, as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, and that he was present with St Peter and St James, the Lord’s brother, at the Apostolic Council at

<sup>1</sup> Euseb., III. 23.

<sup>2</sup> De Præscript. Hæret., 32.

Jerusalem, 51 or 52 A.D., some years after James his brother had been slain by Herod, as St Paul testifies (Gal. ii. 9), is part of unquestionable Apostolic history.<sup>1</sup> That he left Jerusalem some years later, and with others of the Apostles and disciples of Christ settled in Asia and became head of the Church of Ephesus, is a tradition of the early Church which was never questioned till the nineteenth century. That he was banished to Patmos in the reign of Domitian, and there saw the visions of the Revelation which he has put on record; that on his return to Ephesus on the death of the tyrant, he lived there, teaching and guiding the fortunes of the Church in Asia until the reign of Trajan, is testified by authorities who could scarcely be mistaken. That he wrote his Gospel and Epistles towards the close of his long life has been shown to be supported by a great mass of credible evidence. In the controversy regarding the celebration of Easter, which arose about 160-170 A.D., one of the parties appealed to his practice in Asia, as one who had been intimately associated with

<sup>1</sup> Dr Schwartz holds that the author of Acts, "for the sake of the later tradition," omitted the name of John in telling of the death of James in Acts xii. 2, and that the John mentioned by St Paul in Gal. ii. 9 is John Mark of the Acts, whom the author of that book mistook altogether, and who is not the Mark of St Paul's Epistles. To such mutilation of the Apostolic history he is driven in the attempt to make good an impossible case.

the Lord, and had partaken of the Last Supper with the rest of the Twelve. Montanism, which originated in Phrygia about 156 A.D., based itself upon the doctrine of the Paraclete set forth in the Gospel according to John. The story of the flight of John<sup>1</sup> from the bath, in which he found the heretic Cerinthus, "the enemy of the truth," is in keeping with what is recorded of the son of Thunder in the Gospels; and there is much in the Epistles and Revelation of St John to recall the disciple who (with his brother James) wished to call down fire from heaven upon the inhospitable Samaritans. With the phantom Presbyter John eliminated from the sub-Apostolic history on the one hand, and the erroneous assertion of the death of St John by the Jews cleared out of the way on the other, the ancient tradition of the residence of St John in Ephesus must stand, and the Johannine authorship of the Fourth Gospel is established.

Into the differences between St John's Gospel and the Synoptic Gospels, raising suspicion as to the credibility of the former, and into other difficulties arising from the peculiarities of the Fourth Gospel, we cannot enter here. We believe there is no need to come past St John himself to a school of disciples who preserved and set forth his recollections. It was possible for the Apostle to have

<sup>1</sup> Euseb. H. E., IV. 14. 6.

retained by dint of a well-trained memory and by constant repetition, even to extreme old age, his own recollections of his Master; and it is just a question how far those discourses which he puts into his Master's lips have taken their special mould and colour from the Apostle himself. In affirming the possibility that the former fisherman of Bethsaida might have been able at the close of his long life to produce a work like the Fourth Gospel, we take account not only of the natural gifts and the spiritual susceptibilities which made him "the disciple whom Jesus loved," but also of the training he had enjoyed during those three years in the company of Jesus, of the teaching of the Holy Spirit, who was promised to bring all things to the remembrance of the disciples, and of the tendencies of thought and speculation with which he was familiar at Ephesus in the closing decades of the first century. That the Apostle's own spiritual experience and his own intellectual affinities should have dwelt upon certain aspects of his Master's teaching, and should have cast them in the mould in which we have them in the Fourth Gospel, is surely in the highest degree probable. It is in this direction that we are to seek the explanation of the differences in the substance and presentation of our Lord's discourses in St John and the Synoptics respectively. This is the view taken by many scholars who maintain

the Johannine authorship. Luthardt<sup>1</sup> has said: "When Hilgenfeld thinks that the historical is sunk in the doctrinal, we can readily own it, rightly understood. What they call doctrinal is just the soul of the history, which shines out everywhere from the body of the history. It is true that this is not possible without a certain freedom in the handling of the historical materials, and indeed a greater freedom than we permit to ourselves and to others. But in antiquity in general, and on Biblical ground in particular, they stood towards the historical material in a manner different from ours." This is perhaps the utmost latitude which a defender of the genuineness of the Gospel permits himself, and it is the position of scholars whose theological position is much more advanced than Luthardt's. The late Dr P. J. Gloag<sup>2</sup> has no hesitation in allowing a certain degree of subjectivity on the part of John. The thoughts and sentiments were those of Jesus, but "John clothed them in his own language, and in some cases subjoins to those discourses of Jesus his own reflections. Probably, also, he unites into one discourse utterances of Jesus spoken at different times."

We have thus traced the Fourth Gospel up to the threshold of the Apostolic age, and we have

<sup>1</sup> St John, the Author of the Fourth Gospel, p. 247.

<sup>2</sup> Introduction to the Johannine Writings, pp. 146, 147.

seen that modern attempts to rob the Apostle John of its authorship have not proved successful. When we turn to the Gospel itself, despite acknowledged difficulties in the internal evidence, we find proofs which satisfied scholars like Westcott and Lightfoot and Luthardt of a former generation, and scholars like Professor Sanday, Principal Drummond, and Professor Zahn, still spared to us, that the external and the internal evidence converge upon John the Apostle, the son of Zebedee, as the author.

## CHAPTER XVII.

## CONCLUSION.

THE Four Gospels, it may be reasonably concluded, were written by the Evangelists whose names they bear, and to whom they were ascribed by the almost unbroken tradition of seventeen centuries. That tradition derives consistency and strength from the society within which the Gospels originated, and for whose spiritual requirements they were written — the Church of believers in Christ, which early spread over the Roman world. The Church as it passed beyond the borders of the Holy Land preserved its continuity still with the mother Church of Jerusalem. Hegesippus,<sup>1</sup> a Jewish Christian writer of the second century, tells how on his journey from the East to the West he met a great number of bishops, and found the same doctrine held by them all; from which it is clear that the life, the thought, and

<sup>1</sup> Euseb. H. E., IV. 22.

the activity of the Churches of Antioch, Ephesus, Corinth, and Rome were governed from the first by the traditions of the Life and Teaching of the Lord which came down from the Apostles. Considering the importance attributed to the works of Apostles and Apostolic men, it would be strange if the Church which recognised the Four Gospels as precious above all others and gave them currency—making copies of them and using them early in the Christian assemblies for worship and instruction—should have lost all trace and knowledge of their authors. It is nothing wonderful that the Evangelists themselves do not put their names in the title-page of their Gospels. Not one of Plato's dialogues designates him the author; we owe the attribution to literary tradition. The tradition within the Church of the authorship of the Gospels is equally worthy of acceptation. The Evangelists whom Irenæus quotes by name without the shadow of a doubt, the Apostles and those who followed them referred to and quoted by Justin Martyr, the St Matthew and St Mark noticed by Papias, the St John named by Theophilus of Antioch, are not pseudonymous writers, but the Apostolic and inspired authors of our Four Gospels. It is as certain as anything in the history of literature can be that St Mark and St Luke wrote the Gospels attrib-

uted to them. Difficulties have been raised by criticism regarding the authorship of the First and Fourth Gospels, yet even they are held by advanced critics to be somehow closely associated with Matthew and John, the Apostles of the Lord. The Four Gospels, therefore, being essentially of the character of contemporary records, contain a consistent and trustworthy history of the Life and Work and Teaching of Christ, written by men who had adequate opportunities of ascertaining the facts and took pains to set forth in their narratives the truth regarding Him.

Whilst the Gospels are a veracious record of the work of Christ in human redemption, the Church is the living witness from the beginning both to them and to Him. The Church existed before the Gospels. First of the New Testament Scriptures came, in all probability, the Epistles of St Paul, who had none of the written Gospels. The casual and occasional character of these Epistles has been more and more recognised of recent years, but this does not detract from their value as an interpretation of the Person and Work of Christ and as a witness to the facts of the history. Though in St Paul's Epistles and the other New Testament books there is no certain reference to written documents containing the words of Jesus, and but

scanty references even to the incidents of His life in detail, the Gospel writers and St Paul draw from the same fountain-head, the fundamental presuppositions of St Paul's Epistles and the other New Testament writings being in entire accord with the Gospel presentation of the Person and Teaching of Christ. It is little to say that the New Testament writings form a consistent and homogeneous whole, the Person of Christ being the keystone which binds them all harmoniously into one, the Spirit of Christ giving them their vitality and moral power.

From the death of St Paul about 65 A.D. to the martyrdom of Polycarp in 155 A.D. the history of the Church flows through a dark tunnel, where the remains of early Christian literature are scanty and the light of tradition uncertain and dim. Yet the chain of early witnesses through that period is of great strength. Polycarp unites the generation of the Apostle John, the last survivor of the Twelve, with that of Irenæus and its manifold literary and ecclesiastical developments. Even in the first quarter of the second century one of the early Apologists, Quadratus, could appeal to personal testimony: "The works of our Saviour were ever present; for they were real, being the men who were healed, the men who were raised from the dead, who were not only

seen at the moment when the miracles were wrought, but also were seen continually, like other men being ever present, and that not only when the Saviour sojourned on earth, but also after His departure for a considerable time, so that some of them survived even to our times.”<sup>1</sup>

More impressive even than this testimony of eyewitnesses are the evidences of the working of a creative force of the first magnitude, which is met everywhere within the Roman empire by the middle of the second century. Its effects are seen from Antioch of Syria to Carthage and Gaul, and from Bithynia on the Black Sea to the Nile and the borders of Ethiopia. They are found in a network of communities calling themselves by the name of Christ, united under a simple rule of Church organisation, by the observance of common rites, and by an ardour of devotion to their Divine Master which opposition and persecution are unable to quench. They attribute their new life, with its lofty moral purpose, its benevolent activity, and its heavenward aspirations, to Him who was born of the Virgin, suffered under Pontius Pilate, rose from Joseph’s sepulchre, and ascended to God’s right hand. “The archives for me,” says Ignatius, “are

<sup>1</sup> Euseb. H. E., IV. 3.

Jesus Christ, the inviolable archives of His Cross, and Death, and Resurrection, and faith which is through Him.”<sup>1</sup> He speaks of himself as “having fled to the Gospel as to the flesh of Jesus,” and declares “the excellence of the Gospel to be the Advent of the Saviour, His Passion, and His Resurrection.” And here is another witness: “God gave up His own Son a ransom for us, the Holy for the unholy, the Innocent for the wicked, the Righteous for the unrighteous, the Incorrputible for the corruptible, the Immortal for the mortal. For what else could cover our sins but His righteousness? In whom was it possible for the unholy and ungodly to be justified but in the Son of God alone? O sweet exchange! O unsearchable contrivance! O unlooked-for blessing, that the transgression of many should be hidden in the Righteous One, and that the righteousness of One should justify many transgressors!”<sup>2</sup> That is the voice of a soul out of the second century whose name has not come down to us, but clearly a follower of St Paul, and one whom Luther and the Reformers would have claimed as spiritually kin with themselves.

But all this spiritual life goes back to those Four Gospels already acknowledged to be pre-eminent, and exercising their primacy because

<sup>1</sup> Ign. Philad., viii. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. ad Diognetum, ix. 2-6.

they alone, and they sufficiently, meet the spiritual necessities of the living and expanding Church of Christ. The process by which they and the other Scriptures of the Christian Church came to be regarded as of Divine authority has already been noted. They are, in the first instance, preferred and put in circulation because they contain a record by Apostles and Apostolic men of the Divine Founder of Christianity, and an interpretation of His great work as the Revealer of God and the Redeemer of men. Whatever has to do with Christ is in special demand, and the Apostles and their followers from their nearness to Him are at once reliable witnesses and authorities to be held in special reverence. It was thus that not only the Gospels directly telling of Christ, but the Scriptures as a whole, came to be called "the Lord's Scriptures" (*κυριακὰ γραφαῖ*).<sup>1</sup> In this way the writings which come from the hands of Apostles acquire that sacredness and authority which belong to them from the earliest notices of them.

It must be remembered that the Bible of the first Christians was the Old Testament. What it was to the Evangelists and St Paul and the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and to our blessed Lord Himself, we learn from the

<sup>1</sup> See for references Zahn, GK. i. 96 f.

Christian Scriptures. To the first Christians it was Holy Scripture (*ἱεραὶ γραφαὶ, ιερὰ γράμματα*) and Scripture *par excellence* (*ἡ γραφή*), and it is quoted in the New Testament with “as it stands written” (*ὡς γέγραπται, γεγραμμένον ἔστι*) and other such phrases. We may be sure that Marcion, who would have none of Judaism or of anything that pertained to that dispensation, and who therefore rejected the Old Testament, was not the first to feel the need of a Christian canon of Scripture. The very existence and use of the Old Testament Scriptures, and the taste begotten thereby, could not fail to awaken very early the desire within the Church for a similar collection of sacred books with Christ for their centre. We see the process far advanced by the close of the second century.<sup>1</sup> To Origen, and even to Clement of Alexandria, and to Tertullian and Irenæus, the New Testament Scriptures were already on a level with those of the Old. The books of the New Testament (*τὰ τῆς καινῆς διαθήκης*) were reverenced by those great Fathers and within the Church as much as those of the Old (*τῆς παλαιᾶς διαθήκης*). Of those sacred Scriptures, the Gospels were earliest in evidence. They were read in Justin’s day (150 A.D.) in the weekly assemblies of the Christians. They were

<sup>1</sup> See p. 49 ff.

translated into the tongues of people beyond the Greek-speaking world. Heracleon wrote a commentary upon St John. Barnabas quotes St Matthew's Gospel with the formula, "As it is written" (*ὡς γέγραπται*). Even the heretic Basilides (125 A.D.) quotes a new Testament writing as Scripture (*ἡ γραφή*), showing how quickly this feeling towards the new body of writings had established itself. It was thus that the heart of the Church, seeking for edification, was directed to the Gospels and those other Apostolic writings which yielded quickening and impulse to the spiritual life of the faithful, and gave them a place of honour and sacredness beside the Old Testament Scriptures.

This placing of the Gospels and the New Testament books on a level with the Old Testament Scriptures implied the consciousness and the belief of the inspiration of these books. Theophilus of Antioch calls St John the Evangelist inspired (*πνευματοφόρος*), and declares that the writings of Prophets and Evangelists agree "because all the inspired men (*πνευματοφόροι*) have spoken by one Spirit of God." Irenæus speaks of the Fourfold Gospel as held together by one Spirit (*ἐνὶ δὲ πνεύματι συνεχόμενον*); and the Muratorian Fragment refers to the facts of the Lord's life as declared in the Gos-

pels by “one guiding Spirit” (*uno ac principali Spiritu*). By the time of Clement and Origen the word “given by inspiration of God” ( $\theta\epsilon\sigma\pi\nu\epsilon\nu\sigma\tau\omega\varsigma$ ) is applied to the New Testament as it was applied by St Paul to the Old (2 Tim. iii. 16).

It was into the channels marked out by the Four Gospels that there flowed all the traditions circulating among the first believers which were necessary for the faith and life of Christians. Oscar Holtzmann, in his ‘Life of Jesus,’ refers to this, regretting we have no more. “For our knowledge of the whole of this Gospel literature,” —referred to by St Luke in the preface to his Gospel,—“it was a disastrous circumstance that already in the second century the Church took the Gospels which were then current, sifted them, and made a selection amongst them. These writings which from her point of view were the more valuable she retained to be read in the services of the community; such as were less valuable, or in her opinion were hurtful to the faith of the community, she excluded from use in Divine worship.” We cannot be too thankful that the heart of the Church, guided by the Holy Spirit, who was promised to lead her into all truth, chose as it did. Even if there had been preserved to us those earlier and presumably fragmentary Gospels to which St

Luke refers, we have no reason to believe that they would have set before us another Christ, or would have handed down any word or act of His out of accord with that sinless Life and Divine Teaching mirrored in the Four Gospels.



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